

Aruba Music Festival 2009

Paulina & Fonseca meet Aruba at Marriott

ORANJESTAD – Yesterday, a Press Conference was held in the Ballroom of the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino where top Latin pop artists Paulina Rubio and Fonseca enjoyed a meet and greet session. Aruba is excited to have Fonseca and Paulina Rubio join the Aruba Music Festival and their performances last night were super sensational. His Excellency Minister of Tourism Edison Briesen opened the gathering together with Gina Lopez of the Aruba Tourism Authority. Event Producer Lee Tofanelli led the Press Conference yesterday afternoon. Tofanelli is the President and CEO of Lee Tofanelli and Associates and has for the last seven years, been the producer of the Aruba Music Festival for the Government of Aruba, Ministry of Tourism and Transportation. Acts who have performed at the Festival are Gloria Estefan; Lionel Richie; John Mayer; Chicago; Crosby, Stills, and Nash; REO Speedwagon; Pat Benatar; Jackson Browne; The Doobie Brothers; STYX; Arturo Sandoval; Queen plus Paul Rodgers; Peter Frampton; Robin Gibb; and Richard Marx. □

~ Photo by Julia Renfro ~



Island's muscle champions bring home the medals

Caroly Erasmus wins third place trophy in Women's Open Fitness

By Vejay Steede

Members of the Bermuda BodyBuilding, Fitness and Figure Team are celebrating after returning from the 37th Annual Central American and Caribbean Body Building and Fitness Competition in Grenada with a clutch of medals.

The 13 member team represented Bermuda in 10 different categories, and earned 11 medals, including three first place trophies during the event last weekend.

Ranae Cann took first place in the Women's Class D Body Fitness category, while Current Miss Bermuda Susan Rebello took home the first place trophy in the Women's Lightweight Body Building category. For the men, five-time Mr. Bermuda Ross Caesar captured the first place trophy in the Men's Light Middleweight Body Building category.

Other medal and trophy winners were: Betty Doyling, third place trophy in Women's Class A Body Fitness

Category; Mechelle Willins, third place trophy in Women's Class B Body Fitness; Caroly Erasmus, third place trophy in Women's Open Fitness; Natosha Rayner, fifth place medal in Women's Open Fitness; Monroe Darrell, second place trophy in Men's Open Fitness; JaVaughn Dill, fifth place medal in Men's Lightweight (Body Building) class; Devon Bean, fifth place medal, Men's Light Middleweight; and Garwin (House) Phillips taking the third place trophy in the ever popular and highly contested Super Heavyweight class.

The Bermuda athletes arrived in Grenada last Wednesday and were accompanied by coaches Melanie De Rosa, Vice President of the Bermuda Body Building Federation (BBBF), and Muhsin Ashir. Dennis Wainwright, President of the BBBF, Vice President of the Central American & Caribbean Body Building & Fitness Federation (CACBBFF), veteran judge for the International Federation

of Body Builders (IFBB), and Cup Match legend also accompanied the team.

Nineteen countries from the Caribbean and Central America were represented by 135 athletes this year. Competitors from Barbados, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago took home the top overall trophies, thus earning their Professional cards, meaning they are now eligible to participate in professional competitions.

The actual event was delivered, organised, and received well, garnering praise from Mr. Wainwright who said: "The nation of Grenada was an excellent host, and the event was well-organised and well attended."

Coach Melanie DeRosa was also very pleased with this year's event, especially Team

Bermuda's performance, and is looking forward to returning to the 2010 CAC in Aruba with an even stronger team.


This year's complement of veterans and newcomers was quite impressive, and with continued community support, this internationally acclaimed Bermuda team will go from strength to strength in the coming years, she said.

For anyone interested in participating, whether just for training and conditioning or to become a competitor, or if interested in attending the Bermuda and/or Aruba competitions, please write to Melanie De Rosa at goldielockspro@gmail.com □



Fitness Queen Caroly Erasmus represented in the Women's Open Fitness category, taking third place overall.

Photos : Donna Gauthier

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Treat yourself

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Chips Ahoy!



In preparation for the upcoming Fall Menu by celebrity chef Peter Vaulty

L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House hosts a Ravenswood Wine Tasting



ORANJESTAD - L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House is gearing up for a special fall promotion, featuring a spectacular menu

created by celebrity chef and co-owner of Red steakhouse in Miami and Cleveland, Peter Vaulty. Vaulty will also serve



as a guest chef for the duration of the autumn special, kicking off this month.

The special menu will begin with a variety of classic appetizers, such as Peppers stuffed with Home Made Sausage, Oysters Rockefeller and a Steak Tartare of Certified Angus Beef Prime tenderloin, followed by an Apple Salad with Bibb lettuce and Westfield Farms goat cheese. As entrée, diners will be able to choose from Steak Alla Oscar, a Dry-Aged Prime Strip "blackened" with charred pineapple and a Cold-smoked Rack of Pork, accompanied by two sides of their choice. Ensuring the ultimate in dining excellence, the beef dishes will feature Certified Angus Beef brand Prime, available for the first time ever in Aruba.

Also sure to please, the desserts will include a Double Dip crème brulee, Banana Cream Pie and Fresh & Hot Donuts with raspberry jam. Each dish will be accompanied by a special wine suggestion, available by the glass or bottle.

To introduce the suggested wines, the restaurant recently held a wine tasting for its waiters and kitchen staff, introducing them to a selection of wines from Ravenswood Winery in Sonoma, California. Laura Hayes led the tasting of Ravenswood's full-flavored varietal wines, including a



delicious Zinfandel, with the popular TV show Trend Alert filming the event.

Starting October 15th diners will be able to enjoy the sizzlin' fall steakhouse menu. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to enjoy classic dishes prepared by celebrity chef Peter Vaulty,

accompanied by L.G. Smith's own Chef Michael Gomez and Chef Kienfat Lie Kwie.

Photos show the wine tasting organized by F&B Manager John Grigg and Govert van der Hout of Arion Wine Company, accompanied by Ravenswood's Laura Hayes



UltimateBet.com Aruba Poker Classic

Robert Mizrachi Strengthens Lead; Phil Hellmuth is out

Waveless ocean near the shores of the Radisson Hotel and Casino meant smooth sailing for the jetskiers, the parasailors and the booze cruisers who flocked to the water early this afternoon, taking advantage of a beautiful Caribbean day. Inside the confines of the UltimateBet.com Aruba Poker Classic tournament room however, the ride was a little rougher for the 50 players who failed to reach end of the day, leaving 36 players remaining in the tournament heading into tomorrow's Day 4 play. For the second consecutive night, Robert Mizrachi ended the night as chip leader. Mizrachi put on a deep-stack poker clinic on Day 3, having started the day with a field-leading 353,200 in chips and somehow more than doubling that total to finish the day with a whopping 743,500, never once relinquishing the chip lead.

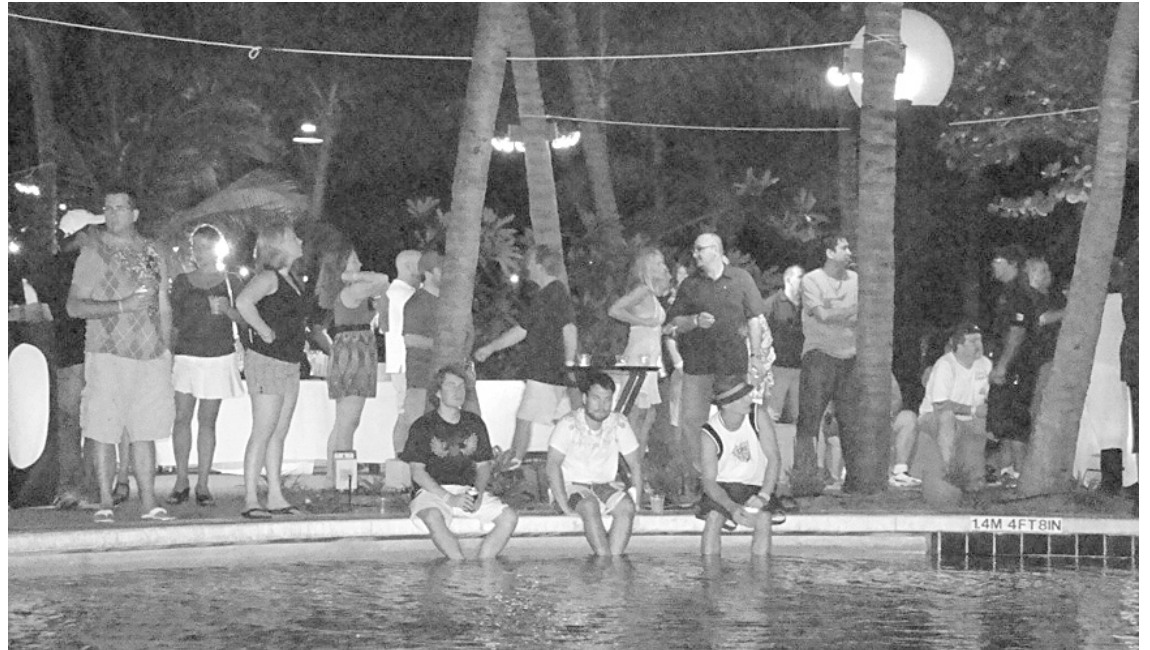
Phil is a tight player and had the patience to wait two days before making any big plays, but when there were sixty two players remaining, Phil got what he waited for two days - pocket rockets. Hellmuth put most of his chips in the middle pre-flop and was called by both John Venturini holding Ac-Kc and Jonathan Lessin who held pocket kings. The flop came down Qh - Qs - 9c which increased the odds of Phil's opponents, and the 10c turn made things worse for Phil. By this point the Ultimate Bet pro was out of his chair, and the river was a king which favored Lessin and moved him from being the smallest stack among all three players to holding a fair amount of chips. Phil was still alive in the tournament but things were not looking good. Just a few hands after Phil put the rest of his chips in play an unfortunately for him his tournament run was over. He finished out of the money since only 45 players get paid. In a hand where Vincent Moscasti held As - 10c and pushed all-in with his 10K chips, there was one caller; it

was John Venturini with his pocket rockets, unfortunately for Moscasti the board ran Kc - 5c - 7s - 3s - Qh, and he was out in the bubble boy position.

UB pro Phil Hellmuth hit the rail midway through the day after losing most of his chips in a hand that saw his pocket aces get cracked by Jonathan Lessin's pocket kings in dramatic fashion. A three-handed preflop showdown pitted Hellmuth's aces against Lessin's kings and the **A♠ K♣** of John Venturini. The flop came a safe **Q♥ Q♠ 9♣** for Hellmuth, but when the **10♠** peeled off on the turn, he pleaded with the dealer, "Oh no! Don't do it!" He did it alright.

The crowd that had gathered around the table erupted - most of them shocked with disbelief - after the dealer laid down the river card - the **K♦**; the only out left in the deck for Lessin. Hellmuth did take down the sidepot, but was eliminated from the tournament a few minutes later after running **A♥ K♥** into Venturini's pocket aces. Last year's defending champ Matt Brady started Day 3 short-staked with just 34,500 in chips, but managed to find a way into the money, despite the fact that he never climbed past 45,000 until the very end of the day, eventually bagging a clean 50,000 in chips.

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he was out in the bubble boy position.

Notable non-cashing Day 3 casualties include UB pros Shawn Rice and Scott Ian, along with Gavin Smith, James Honeybone, Tim West, Al Riccobono, Sol Bergren, Johan Storakers and Casey Kastle.

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'Movement of persons' law terminates discrimination



THE HAGUE--The draft Kingdom law regulating the movement of persons (Rijkswet Personenverkeer) will end discrimination of citizens of the Netherlands travelling to Aruba because it contains uniform rules about free movement and taking up residency of Dutch people.

State Secretary of Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten stated this on Wednesday in response to questions posed by Member of Dutch Parliament Hero Brinkman of the Party for Freedom PVV. Brinkman sought clarity last month following reports from

Aruba that local authorities were implementing stricter immigration regulations for citizens of the Netherlands. According to Brinkman the stricter immigration policy was "discriminatory." In her answers, Bijleveld-Schouten referred to the draft Kingdom law on the

movement of persons. She explained that the idea is that Dutch citizens enjoy the same rights throughout the Kingdom.

The size of the Dutch Caribbean islands is a consideration. "Considering the size of the islands, it is important to prevent unreasonable pressure on the social system by, for example, an influx of people moving to an island with social benefits being the sole aim," stated Bijleveld-Schouten.

Regarding the situation with immigration in Aruba, the State Secretary explained that persons with a Dutch nationality born outside Aruba may stay on the island for 180 days as a tourist without a residency permit. After 180 days, it is stated in the law, people have to register at the Census Office, for which a residency permit is required.

Until recently, Aruba didn't check the precise stay of a Dutch European citizen. "In other words, it was practice that Dutch citizens born outside Aruba could freely enter and depart the island," said Bijleveld-Schouten.

The introduction of the electronic RADEX system makes the stay of a person on the island directly visible and as such Aruban authorities

are better able to apply the immigration policy. The stay is being calculated over the past twelve months, not the calendar year.

"The disadvantages that Dutch citizens born outside Aruba are now faced with are the result of stricter adherence of regulations at the Aruban border and not of amended rules.

I applaud the enforcing of a proper border control system, but I lament that a stricter adherence of the regulations was never clearly communicated. For involved Dutch citizens it concerns a big change of practice," stated Bijleveld-Schouten.

The State Secretary didn't share Brinkman's opinion that the stricter immigration policy was "discriminatory." She explained that at the moment there were no rules on Kingdom level defining the entry of citizens from the Netherlands and as such Aruba was free to apply its own regulations.

That is why uniform rules are necessary to guarantee that citizens from the Netherlands can enjoy the same rights in the entire Kingdom where it comes to free movement and free residency, Bijleveld-Schouten reiterated. □

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Refinery or no refinery?

Valero to cut 100 jobs at Glouco refinery

Texas oil refiner Valero Energy Corp. is seeking to eliminate 100 jobs, or 18 percent of its workforce, at its Paulsboro refinery through retirement incentives. The company disclosed the plan yesterday to the Gloucester County refinery's 550 employees. The job cuts are the latest hardship for a U.S. refinery industry reeling from

overcapacity because of the recession and a move away from gas-guzzling vehicles. Sunoco Inc., the largest refiner in the Northeast, announced Tuesday that it would indefinitely idle its Eagle Point refinery in Gloucester County, which employs 400 full-time workers and hires hundreds of independent contractors. In September, Valero said it

would idle two units at its Delaware City, Del., refinery, eliminating about 150 jobs. Valero has 16 refineries in the United States, Canada, and Aruba. Valero said it did not expect to lay off employees in Paulsboro because it is aiming incentives at those near retirement and enhancing retirement benefits for those eligible to retire,

The cult is back... disco hits at City Lounge

Saturday Night Fever At Cilo



ORANJESTAD-Who doesn't remember the soundtrack of the classic movie from the 70's? "Staying Alive" from the Bee Gees is one of the biggest hits of the 20th century. The movie "Saturday Night Fever" with John Travolta as lead actor has inspired many disco dancers over the years. Disco became a cult! This Saturday, October 10th,

the fever is back! At CILO City Lounge you can feel the rhythm again and swing around on the dance floor. LOTUS with Rien Hurkmans will perform live on stage as they will play the greatest hits from the 70's and 80's. Disco is hot again and you will experience it at CILO this Saturday. The bartender is already preparing his special

disco shots and cocktails, and of course he will serve them at special prices. The event starts at 9pm and will last till 3am. But feel free to walk in earlier for a nice dinner on the outside terrace, the lounge or air-conditioned inside. Be assured that this day the enthusiastic CILO team will offer you some delicious Disco Specials. It's inevitable that you will hear the popular soundtrack that night. The wide screens at CILO will also show you the blockbuster film. So, watch John Travolta as Tony Manero in his tight white pants on the flashy dance floor, while singing along and having fun with your friends. You are invited! CILO City Lounge is located at Renaissance Marketplace and is open from 7am till 3am. □



company spokesman Bill Day said. "We expect this offer to be popular," he said. He declined to disclose the offer. Union as well as salaried workers would be targeted, Day said. "While we have already taken action by shutting down Aruba and the gasification and coker units at Delaware City, which were incurring substantial losses, more must be done," Valero chief executive officer

Bill Klesse told employees. "We will be pursuing cost reductions at Paulsboro and will be aggressively pursuing strategic alternatives for these facilities." The announcement was the third blow this week for Gloucester County. The U.S. Postal Service said it would close its distribution facility in Logan Township by March. That plant has about 650 employees, plus seasonal workers. □

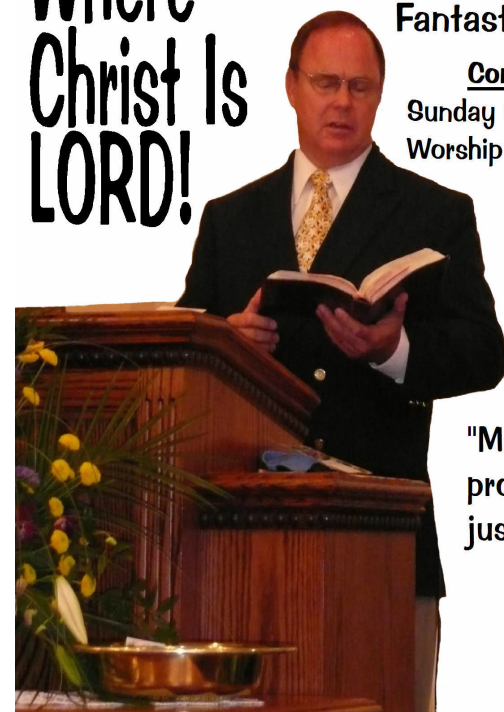
Good News

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Royal family damaged by public debate

Seldom has the Dutch royal family been so publicly discussed as in recent weeks in the Netherlands.



THE HAGUE - After the parliamentary debate on the family's financial affairs on Thursday, prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende concluded that the royal family had been damaged by the debate. A TNS Nipo poll appears to back him up as 37 percent of people in the Netherlands felt their royalist sympathies had waned. The construction of a holiday home for crown prince Willem Alexander and his

wife Máxima in Mozambique, the rising income of the royal family in times of crisis and high expense claims for private flights have all damaged the reputation of the royal family. In the Netherlands, the prime minister is politically responsible for the royal family, although his powers to curb its private financial dealings are limited. For instance, the prince is entitled to invest in a property development as a private person without even

discussing the issue with the prime minister. The holiday home project in Mozambique has become shrouded in controversy. While it has been promoted as a partial development project, which would benefit the local community, persistent rumours of corruption are raising people's doubts about the whole matter. However, Balkenende dismissed the rumours. He

said the project has been held to the highest scrutiny. "Like the prince I have become convinced that the situation in the field does not constitute a problem for the construction of a holiday home. But we did want to have more distance between the prince and the project. So a foundation has been set up."

The prime minister told parliament that, if Willem Alexander decides in the future to become personally involved in the project, he will be informed. Eventually, a majority was satisfied with his explanation.

The problems surrounding the royal household are not limited to the prince's holiday home project. There is also resentment about its allowances. According to the so-called king's budget, queen Beatrix's income is to increase by 40,000 euros next year, while Máxima and Willem Alexander will both receive an extra 7,000 euros at a time when everyone else is asked to tighten their belts, members of parliament complained. The Socialist Party suggested freezing the royal allowances

"in the same way they are doing with the royal family in Spain". Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (PVV) wants to go as far as cutting the budget by 20 percent. Balkenende resolutely rejected these ideas at Thursday's debate.

Labour and the Socialist Party suggested putting an end to expense claims for private flights by the royal family, which last year totalled a staggering 600,000 euros. Here the prime minister was willing to make a concession. In the future, only the queen, her successor and his wife will be allowed to claim expenses for private flights.

The various affairs have led the opposition to call for a different role for the royal family. The Party for Freedom, the Socialist Party and the left-wing liberal party D66 suggested a ceremonial royal family, like the one in Sweden. In this model the queen would no longer be a member of the government and would only fulfil ceremonial duties. Balkenende rejected the idea outright, saying "it would be detrimental to the monarchy" □



Passengers refuse to fly with delayed KLM plane

Twenty passengers saw red over a technical failure that delayed a KLM plane flying from Curacao to Amsterdam for several hours.



WILLEMSTAD - Twenty passengers due to fly from Curacao to Amsterdam on a KLM plane refused to board the plane after the flight was delayed for several hours due to a technical failure. Flight 736 from Hato airport in Curacao's capital Willemstad to Amsterdam's Schiphol airport was delayed Wednesday by several hours

due to a technical failure. After the plane was repaired, the captain decided to carry out additional checks. This proved to be the last straw for a number of passengers who marched off the aircraft, reports the daily newspaper Antilleans Dagblad. The passengers were given accommodation in a hotel and were put on a later flight.

The KLM flight is an 18-year-old Boeing called the City of Lima, which has had experience technical problems before.

In July on another flight from Curacao to Amsterdam, the plane was delayed by 48 hours.

The passengers were offered EUR 250 in compensation on their next KLM flight. However, passengers were not satisfied and were eventually offered EUR 600 instead. KLM also wrote the passengers a letter of apology and offered them psychological assistance if required. KLM celebrated its 90th anniversary on Wednesday. It is the oldest airline operating under the same name in the world. □

Aruba TODAY

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Fishes & More specialize in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all over the world are found back

on the menu and they are already well known for our daily changing specials. If you have a large party, or if there is anything you feel like in particular, Fishes & More can always arrange to have your dinner cooked just for you, as they work only with fresh and honest

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Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort (Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as we have a kids playground and a kids menu to entertain them, so they can enjoy their

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Pam-Pam Café, located in the charming Perle D'Or Resort in Bubali, is the place to be on Friday evenings for a great taste of regional music, dance, food and hospitality, as proprietors and hosts Nico and Monique van de Borne welcome guests for their weekly "Latin Night."

Pam-Pam Café is situated in a delightful tropical setting that is the perfect backdrop for a show by 2002 World Salsa Champions Janice and Oslin Boekhoudt, who run their Pachanga Dance School

out Perle D'Or. They and their dance troupe put on a show of the exotic Zouk, originating from the French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and inspiration for the Brazilian Lambada. If their sensual movements inspire any audience members, they can sign up at Pam-Pam for private dance lessons from the Pachanga crew, which also teach Salsa and Merengue.

In addition to the island music and dance, reasonably prices snacks (10.50 in Aruban florins (\$6) for an Assorted Snack Platter or Buffalo Wings among

other choices) and cocktails are available throughout the evening. From 11 PM until closing time, Pam-Pam offers a special on top shelf whiskey for only 6 Aruban

florins (\$3.50)

If you are looking for the "real deal" in Caribbean entertainment and ambiance and a chance to rub elbows with islanders, schedule Pam-Pam Café as your Friday night entertainment!

Pam Pam restaurant

First-time patrons will be pleasantly surprised by an appealing a la carte menu that is quite affordably priced, and main courses, (25) which are priced between \$13 / \$22.

Pam-Pam's house specialty is a unique method of preparation, which presently,

in Aruba, is found only at their establishment and which they have dubbed their "Gourmet Meal." A grill and a collection of the freshest of ingredients for the various dishes ordered are assembled tableside, and patrons prepare the food themselves, controlling their preference of seasonings and garnishes, along with degree of doneness, providing a unique and personal taste treat. It is suggested that reservations for this singular dining experience be made one day in advance.

When you want to see restaurants menu, visit: www.visitaruba.com Phone; 5877710 or 5932660



Paulina Rubio is one of the top-selling female Latin pop artists with over 20 million records sold worldwide. Paulina, dubbed “La Chica Dorada” (The Golden Girl), is preparing to take the globe by storm yet again with the release of her ninth album, Gran City Pop, due out on June 23rd. Raised in Mexico, Los Angeles, and Spain, she began her wildly successful career at the young age of 10

with the Mexican girl group “Timbiriche,” and thereafter decided to go her own way. Paulina’s eponymous solo album shifted over 3 million records worldwide and garnered her a Grammy nomination for Best Latin Artist in addition to three Latin Grammy nominations, as well as a Billboard award for Best Latin Album and two Premio Lo Nuestro awards for Best Pop Album and Best Female

Aruba Music Festival 2009

Pop Star. With this record, Paulina’s remarkable sales yielded: Triple Platinum and Diamond sales in Columbia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Spain, and Italy. Her album Pau-Latina further cemented her place as she became the highest selling female Latin artist of 2004. That year, Paulina won several Billboard, Premios Juventud and Premio Lo Nuestro awards and was the only Latina nominated at the 47th Grammy Awards. The year after, Paulina became the first female host at the MTV Latin America Video Awards and was also invited to perform at the Nobel Award Ceremony in 2006. Paulina then released the most successful album-to-date of her career, Ananda, which entered the Billboard 200 chart at #31. The single “Ni Una Sola Palabra” also found a home on the charts and won a Latin Billboard Award.

The eagerly anticipated Gran City Pop already hit #1 as a pre-sale on iTunes Latino and consists of 10 tracks. Her latest single, “Causa y Efecto,” debuted on television



at the 2009 Billboard Latin Music Awards and was a radio hit upon its release, quickly climbing the charts. In parallel, Paulina is launching “ORO,” her first fragrance, in collaboration with Oracle Beauty Brands.

Fonseca’s EMI Latin United States debut Corazon is amongst the most impressive releases in recent Latin music, instantly garnering three Latin Grammy nominations, four Latin Billboard Nominations, two MTV Latin America Music Award nominations and four Premio Lo Nuestro nominations (at which he also performed).



From these nominations, Fonseca took home a Latin Grammy for Best Tropical Song of the Year, a

Latin Billboard Award for Tropical Album of the Year, a MTV Music Award for Best New Central Artist,



and a Premio Lo Nuestro for Best New Artist.

In 2008, Fonseca was nominated for two Premio Lo Nuestro Awards for Tropical Mail Artist of the Year and Tropical Traditional Artist of the Year. He released his highly-anticipated sophomore album Gratiitud and first hit single “Enredame” which was #1 in Columbia for nine consecutive weeks.

Most recently, his second single “Arroyito” was released and within two weeks hit the #1 spot in Columbia.

By staying true to his native Colombian rhythms and fusing pop/rock, Fonseca manages to straddle and dominate both

the Pop and Tropical charts, uniquely positioning him as both a Pop and Tropical star. Fonseca’s album and mega hit Te Mando Flores reached top 10 spots on the Latin Album, Pop, Tropical, and Hot Latin Tracks charts. Over a year past its release, Te Mando Flores is still on significant rotation at radio stations.

His follow-up hit single “Hance Tiempo” also slated both the Latin Pop and Tropical Airplay charts. Fonseca has additionally shared the stage with fellow Colombian luminaries Juanes at Campin Stadium in Bogota and Shakira in her home town of Baranquilla. □

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



Don't miss our Plentiful Paella!

A dinner under the Caribbean sky!

Las Ramblas
Tapas & Charcoal Grill

The menu features authentic spanish tapas and entrees such as delicious Seafood Paella, USDA Beef Tenderloin & New Zealand Lamb Chops from the charcoal grill.

Open from 6.00pm - 10.30pm. Closed on Sundays and Wednesdays.
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ORANJESTAD - The Aruba Tourism Authority announced that the legendary band Earth, Wind & Fire will perform at

the 8th Annual Aruba Music Festival to be held October 9 & 10. Earth, Wind & Fire is simply one of the most

Aruba is hot for Earth, Wind and Fire

important, innovative, and celebrated contemporary Pop/R&B music forces of the 20th century. The band has had a remarkable career spanning over four decades with accolades, awards and record-breaking achievements. Earth, Wind & Fire’s signature sound is not easily categorized and since its inception has been profoundly influential...musically, socially, and spiritually.

The musical vision has fused Pop, R&B, Rock, Latin, Funk, Jazz, and African Music into one unique sound. Successfully breaking all musical genre boundaries with 23 albums, Earth, Wind & Fire have recorded eight #1 R&B singles and eight Double Platinum Top 10 Pop Albums over their career. Earth, Wind & Fire have received 20 Grammy Award nominations and have won six awards as a group; additionally its founding

members individually (Maurice White & Philip Bailey) have each won two, totaling eight Grammy Awards. In 2004, Earth, Wind & Fire received the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (N.A.R.A.S.) Signature Governor’s Award.

They have earned more than 50 Gold and Platinum albums and have sold over 90 million albums worldwide earning them a place on the list of best selling music artists of all time. VH1 ranked Earth, Wind & Fire number 60 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of Rock & Roll. Rolling Stone Magazine declared the group “changed the sound of black pop.”

President Obama invited Earth, Wind & Fire to perform in the East Room at the White House for the first social event of the new administration. Earth, Wind & Fire made international news

when President Obama declared in an interview with Rolling Stone Magazine that the group was among his favorites. He said they are “rhythm and blues and pop staples for me.”

Earth, Wind & Fire’s career achievements have been acknowledged and earned them their place in musical history. Earth, Wind & Fire have been inducted into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2000); they have received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (1995) and Hollywood’s Rockwalk (2003). That same year they received the Vocal Group Hall of Fame Award (2003). The music industry and fans have bestowed Lifetime Achievement honors from ASCAP (Rhythm & Soul Heritage Award - 2002), NAACP (Hall of Fame - 1994) and the BET Awards (Life Time Achievement Award 2002). □

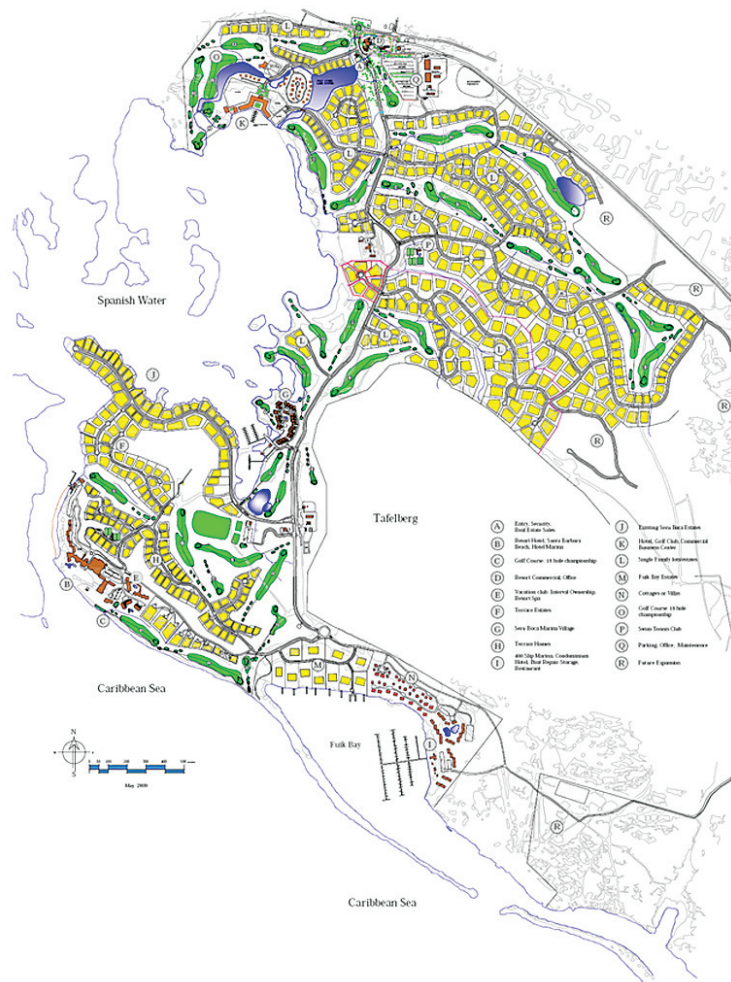
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Curacao's Upscale \$700M Santa Barbara Plantation Prepares for Winter Opening



(CURACAO, LESSER ANTILLES) -- Nestled in the southeast corner of the Caribbean Island of Curacao is a soon to be completed \$700M luxury golf and oceanfront resort community called Santa Barbara Plantation.

This master-planned home and resort community bordered by water on two sides - Spanish Waters Bay to the west and the Caribbean to the south - is now putting the finishing touches on phase one of construction

build out. Santa Barbara Plantation is located approximately 10 miles east of Willemstad, Curacao's capital city and main seaport, and 15 miles from Hato International airport.

Phase one will initially consist of approximately 1,500 acres of land at the western base of a small mountain called Tafelberg, which means 'table top' in English. Santa Barbara Plantation will ultimately have three build out phases on for



Pete Dye overlooking Santa Barbara Plantation golf course

over 4,000 acres of oceanfront land over a fifteen-year build out cycle.

Santa Barbara Plantation offers a wide variety of upscale real estate products which consists of the Marina Villages (23 Villa units priced from \$775K to \$1.2M USD), Seru Boca Estates (45 waterfront lots & homes from \$2M to \$8M USD), Terrace Estate (32 large waterfront & water view lots from \$650K to \$2.5M USD), Terrace Homes (68 custom built homes from \$2.2M to \$2.6M USD), Fairway Lots (9 prime oceanfront/golf front lots from \$1.5M to \$3M USD), and a brand new Hyatt Resort Hotel with 350 luxury rooms, beachfront pool, a day spa, several fine dining restaurants, 6,000 s.f. convention room, boat dock and a Pete Dye designed golf course that is slated for a grand opening in mid-January 2010.

The resort community also has a large new 120-slip marina in the protected waters of Spanish Bay that can accommodate boats up to 80 feet in length with full utility services.

Santa Barbara Plantation is owned by SFT Investments Limited and being developed by the VIDA Group, which is headed by veteran real estate developer Jack Marshall who was involved in developing

and operating such iconic resort communities such as Pebble Beach and Vail Resorts.

Rod Moser, Director of VIDA Group, stated in a one-on-one interview that "Santa Barbara Plantation offers a unique opportunity to those who see value in living in an upscale Caribbean resort community with what I call our 'triple play' - a gated beach front, golf front and marina home community."

The Island itself has 171 square miles of land mass and is located just 37 miles north of Venezuela's coastline in the Lesser Antilles. The island's population is approximately 150,000, and its people are literally a melting pot of primarily Spanish, Dutch and African descent.

Over 300 years ago Curacao's

main industry was salt mining. This was an extremely lucrative export at the time and became one of the major factors responsible for drawing the island into international commerce. Curacao also became a center for slave trade during the 17th and 18th centuries.

A century later, phosphate mining also became significant as did Curacao's deep water port as an ideal location in Caribbean for commerce and trade.

Today, Curacao's main industries including oil refining, tourism and financial services have made it significant money and a banking center of the Caribbean. Because of such, Curacao enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean. □



Chambers meet to discuss joint cooperation, strategy

~ Joint committee to be formed ~

MARIGOT--Officials from the island's respective Chambers of Commerce met for the first time on Thursday since the French side changed the status of its Chamber to Chambre Consulaire Inter-professionnel de Saint-Martin (CCISM).

The courtesy meeting allowed the executive boards of both chambers to exchange views on devising strategy and working together on a number of important projects.

The meeting was facilitated by the respective Dutch side, French side liaison officials, Marcel Gumbs and Melissa

Sedano.

"We decided we need to have ongoing communication as we are one island," said Dutch side Chamber president Glen Carty. "There is more that can be done with joint promotions and to that end there will be a committee set up, comprising three members from both chambers to tackle issues affecting our economy."

Carty said one of the priorities of this committee will be to meet with both tourism offices at the same time, probably next month.

"We want to see a joint

presentation on what their plans are, what their marketing strategies are, and what their plan of action is for St. Maarten/St. Martin for the coming season and seasons beyond," he added. "It's important to get them both together on this, and to know how they are going to pool their resources."

French side Chamber President Stephen Tackling noted that although both chambers had met in the past, little had been accomplished due to the fact the French side chamber had, until now, been a delegation affiliated to Guadeloupe and depended on the blessings of its larger neighbour before decisions could be made.

"This is the first of a series

of meetings we are going to have," Tackling said. "Both Glen and I are very happy to have got to this point. Both sides of the island are affected by the same problems. The objective is to try to solve or harmonise the problems with Government."

"There are many topics to discuss," he continued. "Garbage disposal is one. Why for example do we have two separate disposal systems polluting both sides? There is big revenue to be earned from garbage today. You can make a lot of things out of garbage to bring back revenue for the island."

"We talked about sharing water and electricity in emergencies, the traffic problem, and public

transportation. If we could resolve this problem of buses just stopping in the middle of the road to pick people up, it would ease the traffic congestion. On the French side at least we are a little more advanced in this respect than the Dutch side. Compulsory bus stops, numbered bus routes are emerging and a bus station is in the plans, too."

Also discussed was the problem of businesses evading taxes, using one side of the island or the other to their advantage.

"Both sides are losing money because of it. It needs to be regulated, perhaps by having a centralised data system to track everyone," Tackling added. □

Saba public workers to get 6 years of back pay

THE BOTTOM, Saba — Government workers on the tiny Dutch Caribbean island of Saba are scheduled to receive more than half a million dollars in back wages dating from 2003.

Finance Commissioner Bruce Zagers says \$331,000 will be paid this month, and the remaining \$347,000 by year's end.

Zagers said Thursday that the back wages began accumulating after the government was unable to honor a 2001 promise to provide periodic increases, blaming an economic crisis.

Saba is the smallest of five islands that make up the Netherlands Antilles.

Some 1,500 people live on the island, which is best known for its diving. □

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Laveist appeal case postponed

PHILIPSBURG--A last-minute notice by former DP Commissioner of Social Affairs, Labour and Youth Louie Laveist was the reason for defence lawyer Ralph Richardson to ask for postponement of his client's appeal case that was scheduled to be dealt with by the Joint Court of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles at the Philipsburg Courthouse on Thursday.

Lawyer Richardson told The Daily Herald that Laveist had to urgently fly to New York last Friday where a cardiologist was to check him for heart problems.

The Appellate Court did not yet set a new date for him. Laveist's case was among other appeal sessions for which the three judges of the Joint Court and the Solicitor General had come in from Curaçao. In most of these cases the verdicts were set on a later date, while some were postponed. On April 28, Laveist had immediately filed an appeal after the Judge of First Instance had sentenced him to 18 months, nine of which were suspended with three years probation, a fine NAf. 5,000 and banning from holding office for five years. The judge considered it proven that the former Commissioner had been forging minutes of the Culture Club Foundation. The document was then used to defraud Antillean Co-Financing Organisation AMFO of NAf. 22,750 in subsidy for the 2004 St.

Maarten Day "Rally Around the Flag" project.

It was also found proven that Laveist had accepted a US \$6,000 donation for a work permit, had accepted a bribe in connection with the furnishing of the new Administration Building and for employing an undocumented foreigner. According to the judge, in all these cases the former Commissioner had misused his power for personal gain and made himself guilty of corruption.

The three-judge panel comprising J. de Boer, G. Lewin and J. de Haan decided to postpone the appeal case filed by Police Officer G. Semeleer to December 16 in order to allow for three witnesses to be heard.

On November 25, 2008 the Court of First Instance sentenced Semeleer to three months suspension with three years probation and a one year ban from serving as a police officer. He was found guilty of unlawful entry of a house while off duty and assisting a brothel owner in the search of some of his female employees, who had 'escaped.' Semeleer had been defended by lawyer Denicio Brison, who had pleaded for merely an official reprimand.

In another, unrelated appeal case Isidro Miguel Delgado stood before the three-judge panel assisted by defence lawyer Jairo Bloem. In first instance the judge had meted out a penalty of two years, one of which suspended with a

two-year probation.

He deemed it proven that Delgado had tried to kill Marino Quesedo by stabbing him in the belly at the house of Delgado's spouse on December 10, 2008. Lawyer Bloem in an extensive plea tried to convince the Appellate Court that his client had acted out of self-defence and had not used excessive force in doing so. "He only acted as a normal human being," Bloem said. Solicitor General Mul contested this by saying that Delgado could have called the police when Quesedo had threatened his wife and could have run away when his victim had threatened him with a machete. Instead, a confrontation had followed during which Delgado was injured and had hit back with his knife, seriously injuring Quesedo.

The Appellate Court will forward its verdict in this case from Curaçao on October 29. Another case was dealt with behind close doors, as one of the three men who appeared before the Appellate Court, 15-year-old J. E. B. from New York (Manhattan) USA, is a juvenile. He and three other men were convicted by the Court of First Instance for stabbing to death 21-year-old French national Victor Vannier and severely ill-treating another French national, Maxime Tessier, at an automated teller machine (ATM) in Simpson Bay on Halloween 2008, Friday October 31, 2008. □

CBA launches petition against labour policy

~ Wants govt to completely withdraw policy ~

PHILIPSBURG--Comprehensive Business Association (CBA) has launched a petition against the current labour policy, introduced after some sweeping changes were endorsed by Governor of the Netherlands Antilles Frits Goedgedrag.

In the petition, the association requested that government completely withdraw the policy and revert to the one that was in place prior to January 12.

CBA President Elco Rosario told The Daily Herald on Thursday that while the association agreed with the changes government had made to the January 12 policy, many other discriminatory clauses remained. Rosario said government had done only half the job when it made some changes to the policy first introduced by the former Democratic Party government on January 12, which was considered too stringent by some sectors, including some businesses.

When the National Alliance/Heyliger Government took office it pledged to pull the policy and revise it. A number of changes to the policy were proposed in an Island Council meeting in August. These changes were endorsed by Goedgedrag and introduced this week, according to Labour Commissioner Hyacinth Richardson.

The mandate to sign off on permits on government's behalf was also pulled from Labour Department Head Raphael Boasman.

This mandate can be returned at any time.

Rosario contended that the age limits of 25-57 were discriminatory and would affect many. Government said that, under the new arrangements pertaining to age limits, exemptions would be possible in the case of academic migrants. Rosario said this would exclude the scores of low-skilled non-academics who would therefore not qualify for permits. He said these skills were not available in St. Maarten and this issue needed to be addressed.

The government, he added, should pull the policy, revert to the old one and complete the job on the existing policy □

Stocks post their best week since July

By SARA LEPRO,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — The stock market is keeping its momentum going, giving shares their best week in more than two months.

Moderate gains on Friday led by health care and utility stocks pushed major indexes to their best weekly performance since July. A rebound in the dollar weighed on energy and material stocks.

Bond prices tumbled, extending the previous day's losses, as the Treasury market struggled to absorb \$71 billion of new supply auctioned off this week in the government's ongoing efforts to fund its stimulus programs.

The stock market's seven-month rally was put firmly back on track this week after two down weeks driven by disappointing economic data. Major stock indicators rose 4 percent for the week.

Investors have cheered more signs that the economy is healing, including growth in service industries, a surprise profit from aluminum maker Alcoa

Inc. and the first gain in retail sales in over a year.

On Friday, the dollar drew attention as it recovered some of its recent losses against other currencies after Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke reassured markets that the U.S. central bank will wind down its extraordinary stimulus measures when the time is right.

Some investors interpreted Bernanke's comments as a sign the Fed might raise interest rates sooner than expected, which would boost the dollar versus other currencies.

The dollar is a double-edged sword for the stock market. The dollar would benefit from higher interest rates but if the Fed tightens credit too soon it could choke off an economic recovery. On the other hand a continued fall in the dollar, which is more likely with lower interest rates, could trigger inflation.

"What's particularly concerning for investors is if there is a sharp, sustained move (by the dollar) in one direction or another," said Jordan Smyth, managing director at Edgemoor Investment



Advisors.

The moderate rise in stocks Friday comes two years to the day after the market hit its peak. The Dow is still down 30.4 percent from its high of 14,164.53, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index is down 31.5 percent from its peak of 1,565.15.

According to preliminary calculations, the Dow rose 78.07, or 0.8 percent, to

9,864.94, its highest close of the year.

The S&P 500 index rose 6.01, or 0.6 percent, to 1,071.49, while the Nasdaq composite index rose 15.35, or 0.7 percent, to 2,139.28.

For the week, the Dow rose 4 percent, its biggest gain since the week ended July 24. The S&P 500 index rose 4.5 percent, its best performance since the week ended July 17. □



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AT RENAISSANCE - ORANJESTAD

PG	TOY STORY 1&2 3D				
NEW	daily:	4:00	6:00		
	matinee:	12:00	2:00	late show:	
R	SORORITY ROW				NEW
	daily:	4:15	6:30	8:45	
	matinee:	1:45		late show:	11:00
PG	SUSKE & WISKE				
	daily:	5:00			
	matinee:	12:45	3:00	late show:	12:15
PG	FAME				
	daily:	4:00	6:45	9:00	
	matinee:	12:00	2:15	late show:	11:15
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4				
	daily:			8:00	10:00
	matinee:				12:00
R	JENNIFER'S BODY				
	daily:		5:30	7:45	10:00
	matinee:	1:00	3:15	late show:	12:15
R	WHITEOUT				
	daily:	7:00		9:15	
	matinee:			late show:	11:30
R	THE INFORMANT				
	daily:		6:00	8:30	
	matinee:	1:00	3:30	late show:	11:00

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG	TOY STORY 1&2 3D				
NEW	daily:	4:15	6:15		
	matinee:	12:15	2:15	late show:	12:00
PG-13	SURROGATES				NEW
	daily:		6:30	8:45	
	matinee:	1:15	3:45	late show:	11:15
R	JENNIFER'S BODY				
	daily:		4:45	7:00	9:15
	matinee:	12:15	2:30	late show:	11:30
PG-13	TYLER PERRY'S I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF				
	daily:			8:30	
	matinee:			late show:	11:15
R	ZOMBIELAND				
	daily:	4:00	6:00	8:00	10:00
	matinee:	12:00	2:00	late show:	12:00
PG-13	G.I. JOE: THE RISE OF THE COBRA				
	daily:		6:00		
	matinee:	12:30	3:30	late show:	
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4				
	daily:		8:15	10:15	
	matinee:			late show:	12:15
R	WHITEOUT				
	daily:		5:15	7:30	9:45
	matinee:	12:45	3:00	late show:	12:00



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Image is everything

The halting and delay of various major accommodations projects on the island such as Aquarius is reason for concern. While the decline in pre-construction sales that is partly to blame no doubt has much to do with the global economic downturn and the crisis on the financial and real estate markets in particularly the US, this development is not good for "The Friendly Island."

For years people have been able to invest here with a reasonable measure of confidence in vacation homes, among others. That usually requires a deposit which is used as part of the project's funding itself, rather than building everything with outside financing and then selling the individual units.

This scheme has been the growing trend in the real estate sector all over the world and usually is not an issue, if all goes well. However, if not enough sales are made to continue the project as promised, because there is insufficient money coming in, it can become a major problem, with buyers asking for refunds and developers often reluctant or unable to comply.

Such situations can have negative consequences not just for the person and the project involved, but for the island as a whole. If St. Maarten becomes known as a place you can't really trust when it comes to investing even in an apartment, it could have a serious ripple effect on, for example, also the dominant timeshare sector, where consumer confidence plays an important role as well.

Considering the various complaints of this nature and accompanying legal action or the threat thereof, local authorities would do well to become more involved and at least show they have the interest of the often foreign buyers at heart. Even if the means to actually do something are limited, putting some pressure on the developers involved to deliver what they have promised by periodically calling them in for an explanation does not seem too much to ask.

After all, they depend on the cooperation of government and consequently the tax payer for matters such as licences, permits, land leases, infrastructure and the like. Therefore, it would seem no more than fair that they give account not just to their clients, but to the general public and its elected representatives. □

*** Human Hints Daily ***

Transform Drama Into Comedy

Carl Jung has said that wisdom is the ability to state the obvious. I would say that wisdom is the ability to see the obvious in our selves and in our own lives. This might sound overly-simplistic at first, but if we can master seeing our automatic emotional reactions, we can effortlessly empower our lives by changing ourselves.

It is easy to see obvious emotional patterns in others, but when it comes to ourselves, it is amazing how blind we can be. A situation arises and our automatic reactions kick in. It's easy to get stuck in the same patterns because we cannot see ourselves unless we step outside of ourselves. A mirror works because it displays a separate image. Without a separate image to look at, we cannot see. Once an emotional reaction has occurred, we cannot separate ourselves from it, which means we can't see it.

The good news is that our brain is not designed to stay in blind emotional reaction for an extended time. First the initial emotional wave subsides, then as time passes, our emotions detach themselves further from the trigger. After the initial wave passes, we can begin to analyze the trigger and our personal reaction to it. When we are able to analyze our selves, logic will help us focus on a better course of action.

Blind emotional reaction plays out like a dramatic thriller. Now that you're more emotionally detached, replay the situation as if you were watching your favorite television sitcom from your living room. This takes you out of the situation, and removes the serious tone. Replay the scene in your mind, focusing on your character. What did your character do to instigate the situation? How do they react differently than you, how do they add a comedic twist?

Your lighthearted side wrote your character, so it's not too much of a stretch to identify with yourself. When you see yourself as your character, you empower that aspect of who you are. Now, when the same type of situation arises in the future, you will automatically think of your sitcom-self, and identify with the more lighthearted reactions.

For any given automatic reaction, there are infinite alternative possibilities. Think of what reactions your character can use in order to direct the situation toward the

desired outcome.

This technique will help you separate emotions from the person or situation, and will show you that there different reactions produce different outcomes. Use your imagination and have fun with this. It is an easy way to release the automatic patterns that might be holding you back. You must decide what your detrimental patterns are, and what energy to replace them with.

Changing your negative emotional patterns will directly change your life. When you alter the energy that you express, your life will transform to reflect your new energy back to you. Learn to release that which does not serve you, and your new expression will be reflected back to you as your three dimensional life.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

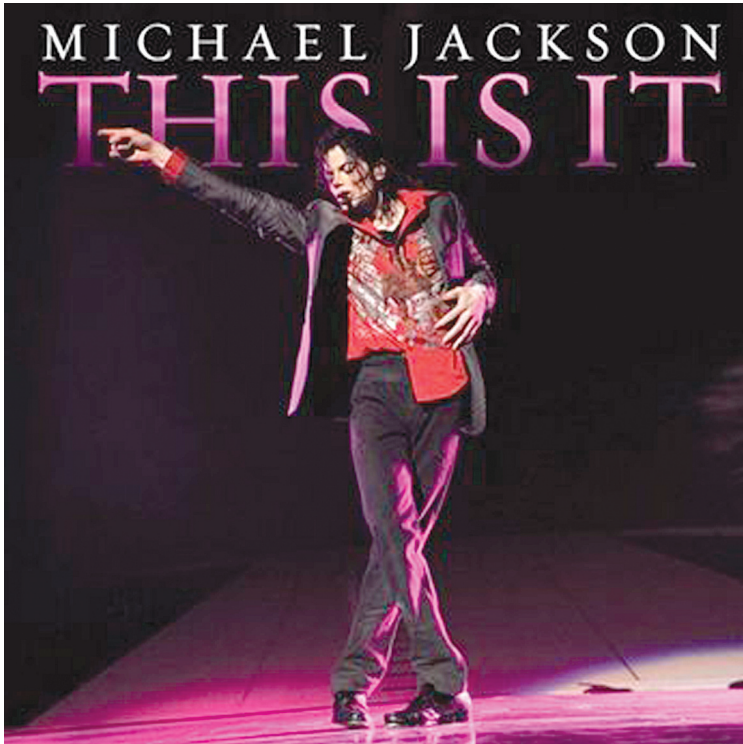
HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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Jackson's 'This Is It' single to debut online



In this CD cover image released by Sony Music, 'This is it,' by Michael Jackson, is shown.

(AP Photo/Sony Music)

NEW YORK – The first song from the upcoming Michael Jackson music documentary will make its debut online.

Sony Music says "This Is It" will have its premiere late Sunday, at midnight, on <http://www.MichaelJackson.com>.

The song plays during the closing sequence of "Michael Jackson's This Is It" and will be included on a companion two-disc CD set. The unreleased single features backup vocals by Michael's brothers, The Jacksons.

The documentary opens Oct. 28 for a two-week limited run and was built around rehearsal footage for Jackson's planned London concerts. He died in Los Angeles on June 25.

The CD features original album masters of some of Jackson's biggest hits, including "Thriller" and "Billie Jean." They're in the same sequence as they appear in the film. □



In this publicity image released Friday, Oct. 9, 2009 by TLC, Anna Duggar, star of TLC's '18 Kids and Counting,' holds her baby girl Mackynzie Renee Duggar, born Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009. The birth of the first grandchild of the Duggar family will be featured in a birth special, '18 Kids and Counting: First Grandduggar' airing Tuesday at 9 p.m. EDT on TLC.

(AP Photo/TLC)

1st grandchild arrives for TLC's Duggars

SPRINGDALE, Ark. – The next generation of Duggars has arrived.

According to The Learning Channel, Mackynzie Renee Duggar was born at 6:39 p.m. Thursday. Mackynzie is the first child of Josh and Anna Duggar and the first grandchild for Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar, stars of TLC's "18 Kids and Counting."

Mackynzie's birth comes as Michelle Duggar is pregnant with her 19th child. She is due in March.

Josh, the eldest of Michelle and Jim Bob Duggar's children, is 21. He and Anna married last fall.

The network says Anna Duggar and Mackynzie are doing well. The baby weighed 8 pounds and was 19.5 inches long. □



Soulja Boy arrested after vacant house video shoot

McDONOUGH, Ga.

– Police say rapper Soulja Boy was charged with obstruction after telling officers that people gathered at an abandoned Georgia house were shooting a music video.

Henry County Police Capt. Jason Bolton said Friday that when officers

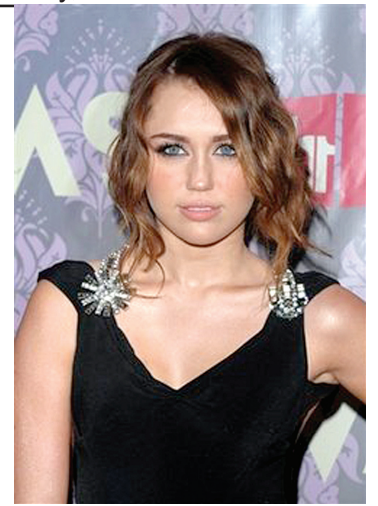
Rapper Soulja Boy, whose real name is DeAndre Cortez Way, is shown in this police handout photo released Oct. 9, 2009 by the Henry County Sheriff's Office. Way was arrested Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009 in McDonough, Ga. for obstruction of a police officer and released on bond.

(AP Photo/Henry County Sheriff's Office)

arrived Wednesday night to investigate complaints, almost half of the 40 people assembled fled by foot. Later, a man identified as DeAndre Cortez Way, Soulja Boy's real name, returned and said the group was shooting a video.

The 19-year-old was charged with obstruction and bonded out of the Henry County jail on Thursday. A telephone call to his publicist was not immediately returned.

The rapper started an Internet dance craze several years ago with the hit "Crank That (Soulja Boy)." More recent hits include "Kiss Me Thru the Phone."



FILE - In this Sept. 17, 2009 file photo, recording artist Miley Cyrus arrives at VH1 Divas concert in New York.

(AP Photo/Peter Kramer, file)

Billy Ray Cyrus urges Miley to return to Twitter

NEW YORK – Most parents want their kids to twitter less, but not Billy Ray Cyrus.

The country music star is urging daughter Miley Cyrus to return to Twitter. The 16-year-old pop star quit the microblogging site earlier this week, puzzling her fans. She had more than 1.1 million followers on the site.

Her father tweeted Thursday that Miley "can't leave everyone now" and said "we r countin on u."

Miley Cyrus' account is no longer active. In one of her last posts, she wrote that Liam Hemsworth, her co-star in the upcoming film "The Last Song," wanted her to delete her Twitter account "with good reason."

Publicists for Cyrus and her father haven't returned requests for comment. □



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Obama's Nobel Peace Prize triumph praised by many



Archbishop Desmond Tutu reacts during a press conference held to congratulate U.S. President Barack Obama in Cape Town, South Africa, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. President Barack Obama won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday in a stunning decision designed to encourage his initiatives to reduce nuclear arms, ease tensions with the Muslim world and stress diplomacy and cooperation rather than unilateralism.

(AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam)

After Nobel, Obama pressed to deliver on nuclear pledge

by Olivia Hampton

WASHINGTON (AFP)— With a surprise Nobel Peace Prize in hand, President Barack Obama came under pressure Friday to make strides in his quest to rid the world of nuclear weapons, a goal experts said would be slow in coming.

“It’s a long-term goal and a long voyage over a pretty big ocean of nuclear disarmament,” former United Nations nuclear weapons inspector David Albright told AFP. Obama is “trying to turn a big ship so it can become an important part of US policy,” he added.

The Nobel committee emphasized Obama’s efforts to bring proliferation and disarmament to the top of the global agenda in a stunning



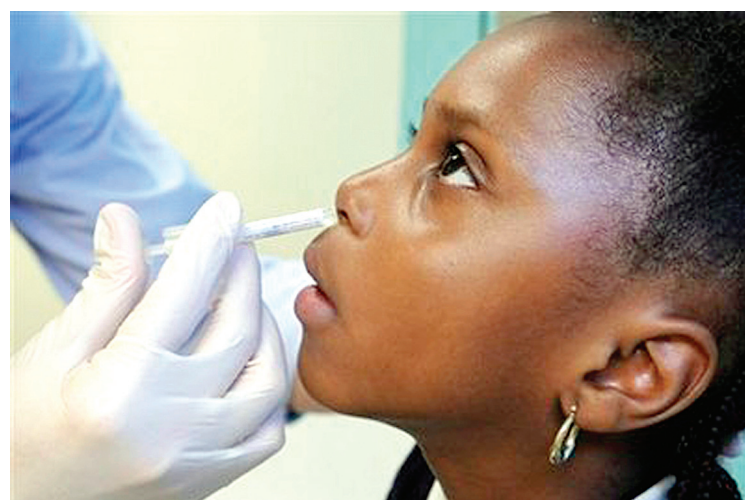
US President Barack Obama speaks at the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC, after winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Obama said Friday he was “surprised” and “humbled” by being awarded the prize and said he doubted he deserved to be honored alongside luminaries who had won the award.

(AFP/Jewel Samad)

decision to award him the months after he took office. coveted prize less than nine

Continued on Page B4

CDC: 76 children dead of swine flu as cases rise



Asia Johnson, 6, of Boston, receives an intranasal H1N1 vaccine at the primary care clinic at Children’s Hospital Boston, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009 in Boston.

(AP Photo/Lisa Poole)

By MIKE STOBBE,
AP Medical Writer

ATLANTA — Health officials said Friday that 76 U.S. children have died of swine flu, including 19 new reports in the past week — more evidence the new virus is unusually dangerous for the young.

Continued on Page B3



A man carries a dead body of a child after a suicide bombing in Peshawar, Pakistan Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. A suicide car bomber detonated his vehicle along a road near a well-known market in Pakistan’s northwest city of Peshawar on Friday, underscoring militants’ ability to strike in major cities despite U.S.-backed military offensives pressuring their networks.

(AP Photo/Mohammad Sajjad)

Pakistan vows offensive after bomb kills 49

By RIAZ KHAN, Associated Press Writer — 2 hrs 41 mins ago
PESHAWAR, Pakistan — Pakistan vowed to launch a new offensive against militant strongholds along the Afghan border after a suicide bomber blew up a car near a crowded outdoor market on Friday, killing 49 people in the bloodiest attack to hit the country in six months. The United States has been pushing Pakistan to take strong action against insurgents who are using its soil as a base for attacks in neighboring Afghanistan.

Continued on Page B8

Surprised, humbled Obama awarded Nobel Peace Prize



President Barack Obama speaks about winning the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009, in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

By KARL RITTER
MATT MOORE,

Associated Press Writers

OSLO — President Barack Obama won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday in a stunning decision designed to build momentum behind his initiatives to reduce nuclear arms, ease tensions with the Muslim world and stress diplomacy and cooperation rather than unilateralism. Obama said he was surprised and deeply humbled by the honor, and planned to travel to Oslo to accept the prize. “I do not feel that I deserve to be in the company of so many transformative figures

that have been honored by this prize,” he said. “I will accept this award as a call to action, a call for all nations to confront the challenges of the 21st century.”

Many observers were shocked by the unexpected choice so early in the Obama presidency, which began less than two weeks before the Feb. 1 nomination deadline and has yet to yield concrete achievements in peacemaking.

Some around the world objected to the choice of Obama, who still oversees wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and has launched deadly

counter-terror strikes in Pakistan and Somalia.

Obama said he was working to end the war in Iraq and “to confront a ruthless adversary that directly threatens the American people and our allies” in Afghanistan.

Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee said their choice could be seen as an early vote of confidence in Obama intended to build global support for his policies. They lauded the change in global mood wrought by Obama’s calls for peace and cooperation, and praised his pledges to reduce the world stock of nuclear arms, ease American conflicts with Muslim nations and strengthen the U.S. role in combating climate change.

“Obama has as President created a new climate in international politics,” the citation read, in part. “Multilateral diplomacy has regained a central position, with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions can play. Dialogue and negotiations are preferred as instruments for resolving even the most difficult international conflicts.” Aagot Valle, a lawmaker for the Socialist Left party who joined the committee this year, said she hoped the selection would be viewed as “support and a commitment for Obama.”

“And I hope it will be an inspiration for all those that work with nuclear disarmament

and disarmament,” she told The Associated Press in a rare interview. Members of the Nobel peace committee usually speak only through its chairman.

The peace prize was created partly to encourage ongoing peace efforts but Obama’s efforts are at far earlier stages than past winners’. The Nobel committee acknowledged that they may not bear fruit at all.

“Some people say, and I understand it, isn’t it premature? Too early? Well, I’d say then that it could be too late to respond three years from now,” Nobel Committee chairman Thorbjørn Jagland said. “It is now that we have the opportunity to respond — all of us.” In Europe and much of the world Obama is lionized for bringing the United States closer to mainstream global thinking on issues like climate change and multilateralism. A 25-nation poll of 27,000 people released in July by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found double-digit boosts to the percentage of people viewing the U.S. favorably in countries around the world. That indicator had plunged across the world under President George W. Bush.

At home, the picture is more complicated. Obama is often criticized as he attempts to carry out his agenda—drawing fire over a host of issues from government spending to health care to the conduct of the war in Afghanistan.

U.S. Republican Party

Chairman Michael Steele contended that Obama won the prize as a result of his “star power” rather than meaningful accomplishments.

“The real question Americans are asking is, ‘What has President Obama actually accomplished?’” Steele said. Drawing criticism from some on the left, Obama has been slow to bring troops home from Iraq and the real end of the U.S. military presence there won’t come until at least 2012.

In Afghanistan, he is seriously considering ramping up the number of U.S. troops on the ground and asking for help from others, too.

“I don’t think Obama deserves this. I don’t know who’s making all these decisions. The prize should go to someone who has done something for peace and humanity,” said Ahmad Shabir, 18-year-old student in Kabul. “Since he is the president, I don’t see any change in U.S. strategy in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

Obama has said that battling climate change is a priority. But the U.S. seems likely to head into crucial international negotiations set for Copenhagen in December with Obama-backed legislation still stalled in Congress.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who won the prize in 1984, said Obama’s award shows great things are expected from him in the coming years.

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New US law helps ill students keep health coverage

By HOLLY RAMER,
Associated Press Writer
CONCORD, N.H. — A federal law inspired by a New Hampshire woman's courage and enacted through her mother's determination took effect Friday, sparing seriously ill or injured college students from having to choose between taking time off and keeping their health insurance.

"Michelle's Law" allows college students to take up to a year off school for medical reasons and remain on their family's health insurance plan. It is named for Michelle Morse, who died of colon cancer at age 22 in 2005, six months after graduating from Plymouth State University.

Against her doctor's advice, the aspiring teacher maintained a full course load while undergoing chemotherapy because she otherwise would have been dropped from her parents' health insurance plan.

After her daughter's death, AnnMarie Morse made it her life's mission to ensure other families would not face the same choice. When someone from the state insurance department told her, "If you don't like the law, change it,"

that's exactly what she did.

The New Hampshire Legislature enacted its version of Michelle's Law in 2006. Morse then turned her focus to Congress, which passed the federal version last year.

"It's a very bittersweet day," Morse said at a news conference Friday, her voice trembling. "I wish I could turn back time and have the family my husband and I were given: one daughter, one son."

But she said she will continue to fight for health care reform. She was in Washington just a few weeks ago, telling members of Congress to "put patients before politics."

"Michelle's legacy will live on," she said.

Morse was joined by Rep. Paul Hodes, D-N.H., who sponsored the House version of the bill. Sen. Judd Gregg and former Sen. John Sununu, both R-N.H., led the efforts in the Senate.

Hodes estimated that the law could apply to thousands of college students nationwide.

"The message of Michelle's Law is that change is hard, but change is possible," he said.

"Health care reform is more than words, it affects people." Gregg called the law a testament to Michelle's



Standing behind a picture of her daughter Michelle, AnnMarie Morse talks about Michelle's Law with U.S. Rep. Paul Hodes, D-N.H., left, and Plymouth University President Sara Jayne Steen in Concord, N.H., Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. The new law takes effect Friday across the country named after Michelle Morse who attended college full-time in order to keep her insurance before she died of colon cancer in 2005.

bravery and to her family's dedication.

"I applaud Michelle's mother, AnnMarie, for seeing this legislation through every step of the way," he said in a statement. "Her commitment is a remarkable tribute to her daughter's memory."

In a journal the Morse family shared with The Associated

Press in 2006, Michelle Morse described her longing to have a family of her own, celebrate many Christmases and outlive her parents.

"I'm scared for my mom and dad," she wrote in December 2003, just after she was diagnosed. "I want to make this easier on them."

Sara Jayne Steen, president

(AP Photo/Jim Cole)

of Plymouth State University, said no one can spare families the pain of losing a child, but Michelle's Law will at least eliminate the tough choice between treatment and education.

"Can one person make a difference? The answer, profoundly and in front of us, is yes," she said. □

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The intranasal H1N1 vaccine is displayed at the primary care clinic at Children's Hospital Boston, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009 in Boston.

(AP Photo/Lisa Poole)

SWINE FLU

Continued from Page B1

The regular flu kills between 46 and 88 children a year,

according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That suggests deaths from the new H1N1 virus could dramatically outpace children's deaths from seasonal flu, if swine flu continues to spread as it has.

CDC officials say 10 more states, a total of 37, now have widespread swine flu. A week ago, reports suggested that cases might be leveling off and even falling in some areas of the country, but that did not turn out to be an enduring national trend.

"We are seeing more illness, more hospitalizations, and more deaths," the CDC's Dr. Anne Schuchat said at a press conference Friday.

The new virus, first identified in April, is a global epidemic.

The CDC doesn't have an exact count of all swine flu deaths and hospitalizations, but existing reports suggest more than 600 have died and more than 9,000 have been hospitalized. Health officials believe millions of Americans have caught the virus.

The virus is hitting young people harder. Experts believe older people are suffering from it less, perhaps because they have a bit of immunity from exposure over the years to somewhat similar viruses.

Most healthy children recover and often suffer only mild symptoms. But some have died from it, often from a second infection that moves in while the body is weakened from the flu. Kids with asthma or chronic heart or respiratory

conditions also are at greater risk for serious complications. Experts say it's important for parents to watch their children's symptoms carefully. If a child appears to get better, but fever and a cough return, there may be a second infection. Other trouble signs are rapid or difficult breathing or bluish skin color.

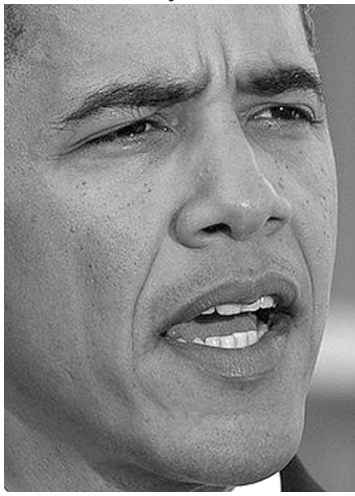
Vaccinations against swine flu began this week and so far, states have ordered 3.7 million doses. Demand is exceeding supply, and people seeking the vaccination should ask their state or local health department where to go, said Schuchat, who heads the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

Health officials also said more data is trickling in from

several clinical trials of the new vaccine, and so far no serious side effects have been reported.

Preliminary results from one study indicate that both a seasonal flu shot and a swine flu shot are effective when given during the same doctor's office visit. However, the government is not recommending that people get the nasal spray versions of the seasonal and swine flu vaccines at the same time.

The nasal sprays contain weakened, live virus, and the government doesn't have data on how a person's immune system would react to exposure to both at once, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. □



US President Barack Obama speaks at the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC after he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Obama on Friday said he was “surprised” and “humbled” by his shock Nobel Peace Prize but admitted he doubted he deserved an exalted place alongside revered former winners.

(AFP/File/Jewel Samad)

NUCLEAR PLEDGE

Continued from Page B1

Albright said an important “test” of that effort would be ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or

the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. But Obama may lack the necessary votes in the US Senate.

Just two weeks before receiving the award, Obama chaired an unprecedented UN Security Council summit to rally world support for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Previous US winners

The president is hoping to make gains by inking a new nuclear arms reduction pact with Russia to replace a treaty that expires in December.

“We must now intensify our efforts to eliminate these unusable weapons,” urged Physicians for Social Responsibility executive director Peter Wilk.

“We are only at the beginning of the real work needed to make this vision a reality.”

Obama has unilaterally scrapped controversial US plans to deploy missile interceptors and a radar in eastern Europe that Moscow had vehemently opposed.

Washington and Moscow have agreed to seek deeper cuts in their nuclear arsenals in a follow-on to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the first tangible benefit from Obama’s efforts to “reset” relations with Russia.

Signed in 1991 just before the break-up of the Soviet Union, START has become the administration’s top arms control priority as it faces growing challenges on many other policy fronts.

The Obama administration also hopes the prize will help its effort to wean Tehran and Pyongyang from their controversial nuclear drives.

“For all the kinds of political problems it could cause here in the US, it could give him more clout on Iran and North Korea,” said Princeton University professor of history and public affairs Julian Zelizer.

But in his push to rid the world of nuclear weapons -- a goal Obama acknowledged will likely not be achieved during his term or his lifetime

-- he still has to worry about a nuclear arms race exploding in the Middle East if Tehran makes substantial progress on its program.

Key US allies Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have hinted they may seek to develop nuclear weapons to bolster their defenses against Iran as it gains clout in the Middle East.

Western governments and Israel, largely considered to be the Middle East’s sole, albeit undeclared, nuclear power, have accused the Islamic republic of trying to develop atomic weapons under the cover of its civilian program, a charge Tehran denies.

And North Korea has continued to defy international pressure, conducting an underground nuclear test and launching missiles this year as it ratchets up a tense stand-off on its nuclear program.

But if Washington fails to ratify the CTBT, Obama may face enormous difficulties in convincing the rest of the

world to freeze their nuclear weapons programs.

Sentiment on that front will be tested when the president hosts global leaders for a nuclear security summit in March.

Drawn up in 1996, the treaty has been signed by 181 countries and ratified by 149. But it needs the approval of nine others, including China and the United States, before coming into force.

The prize also came as the 48-year-old president has yet to deliver on any of the key foreign policy issues that top his agenda, such as closing Guantanamo Bay, restarting the Middle East peace process, ending the war in Iraq and improving the security situation in war-torn Afghanistan.

Obama’s Nobel win “is really based on the promise of what he can do... rather than on any concrete achievements,” noted Zelizer.

“When you raise expectations, deflating them can be devastating.” □

Obama discusses troop levels for Afghanistan

By PHILIP ELLIOTT,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Hours after winning a Nobel Peace Prize, President Barack Obama assembled his war council in the White House basement to discuss the 8-year-old Afghanistan conflict that military commanders are pressing him to escalate.

The president and his top national security advisers huddled in the Situation Room to hear top military officials make their case for tens of thousands of additional troops to target al-Qaida. The session marked the first time Obama has questioned his inner circle specifically about troop levels needed to right a war that has languished in progress and popularity.

A decision, though, was not in the offing.

“I still think we’re probably several weeks away,” White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told reporters before the meeting began. “I think the president feels like the discussions are going well.”

Obama has told top advisers he wants to identify objectives before committing troops or military assets to achieve them. Even his closest advisers say they have no idea where Obama is leaning on a war he inherited but now must execute.

Friday’s session was the fourth of at least five with Obama and more than a dozen key administration officials, including top diplomats and military brass. Before Friday, the lengthy discussions involving Afghanistan and Pakistan stuck to strategy formulation.

Those talks have sharpened the mission’s focus to fighting al-Qaida above all other goals and downgraded the emphasis on defeating the Taliban, a senior administration official who participated in the discussions said Thursday. The official was authorized to talk to The Associated Press but not to be identified, because the discussions were private.

Under the evolving strategy, the official said, the U.S. would fight only to keep the Taliban from retaking control of Afghanistan’s central government — something it is now far from being capable of — and from turning the country back into the sanctuary for al-Qaida that it was before the 2001 invasion ousted the regime.

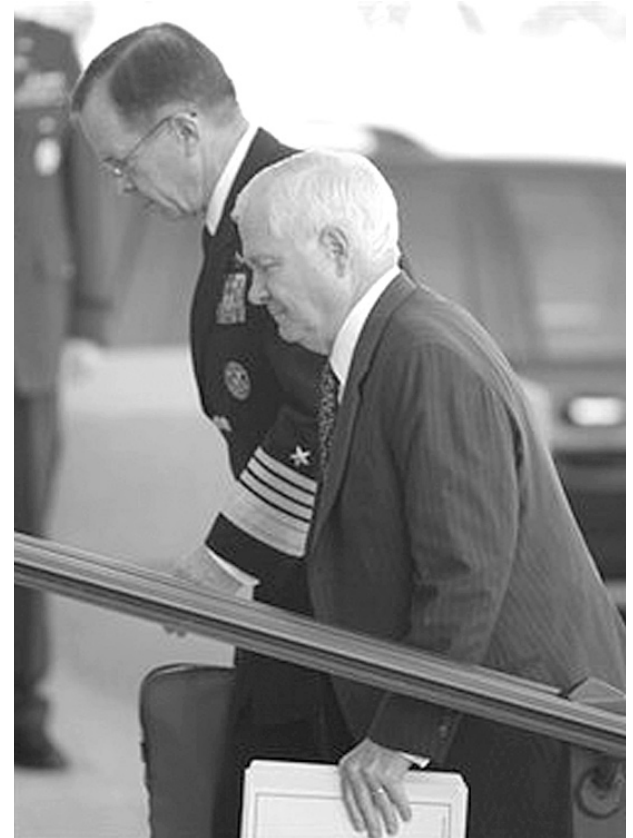
The official said Obama will determine how many more U.S. troops to deploy to Afghanistan based only on keeping al-Qaida at bay.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, is believed to have presented Obama with a range of options, from adding as few as 10,000 troops to as many as 40,000. It’s an unpopular position among some of Obama’s fellow Democrats and even among some of the officials he has summoned to the secure conference room.

Obama’s renewed focus on defeating al-Qaida — the same objective he outlined when he first announced a new Afghanistan strategy in March — has many implications for the debate over a war that the public is souring on. According to a new Associated Press-GfK poll, public support for the war has dropped to 40 percent from 44 percent in July.

National security adviser James Jones has said that according to maximum estimates, al-Qaida has fewer than 100 fighters operating in Afghanistan without any bases or ability to launch attacks on the West. Instead, the U.S. fight in Afghanistan is against the Taliban, now increasingly defined by the Obama team as distinct from al-Qaida. While still dangerous, the Taliban are seen as indigenous with almost entirely local and territorial aims and far less of a threat to the U.S.

A focus on al-Qaida is the driving force behind an approach being advocated by Vice President Joe Biden as an alternative to the McChrystal



Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen, left, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates arrive at the Pentagon, Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009, after a meeting at the White House to discuss’ Afghanistan and Pakistan.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

recommendation for a fuller counterinsurgency effort inside Afghanistan.

Biden has argued for keeping the American force there around the 68,000 already authorized, which includes the 21,000 extra troops Obama ordered earlier this year. The vice president proposes significantly increasing the use of unmanned Predator drones and special forces for the kind of surgical anti-terrorist strikes that have been successful in Pakistan and Somalia. □

2 die, 19 overcome at Arizona retreat sweat lodge

By FELICIA FONSECA,
Associated Press Writer
PHOENIX – Two people died and an estimated 19 others were taken to hospitals after being overcome while sitting in a sauna-like sweat lodge during a Sedona spiritual retreat, authorities said Friday.

Sixty-four people were in a crudely constructed sweat dome at the 70-acre Angel Valley resort Thursday evening, Yavapai County sheriff's spokesman Dwight D'Evelyn said. The resort nestled in the forest about 20 minutes from Sedona, a resort town about 115 miles north of Phoenix that is well-known as a center for the New Age spiritual movement.

Many people began feeling ill after about two hours in the sweat box, emerging lightheaded and weak, said Verde Valley Fire District Chief Jerry Doerksen. Authorities haven't determined the cause of the deaths and illnesses; tests for carbon monoxide and other contaminants were negative. D'Evelyn said

authorities were checking into whether any of the attendees had pre-existing medical conditions and the possibility that some of the people might have been fasting. About 21 people were taken by ambulance or helicopter to area hospitals, where two were pronounced dead, D'Evelyn said. The dead were identified only as a man and woman, both middle-aged.

Three people taken to Flagstaff Medical Center were listed in critical condition Friday, and another was in fair condition. Three others who were admitted to a hospital in nearby Verde Valley recovered quickly; two of them were released overnight and one was reported in good condition Friday.

Sheriff's homicide investigators were working to determine what happened and whether any criminal actions might have been a factor in the incident, D'Evelyn said. Investigators were at the resort Friday interviewing the retreat director, staff and guests, including some who

told detectives they paid up to \$9,000 for the multi-day program.

A woman who answered the phone at the resort Friday said its founders, Michael and Amayra Hamilton, would have no comment. A call to the Hamilton's home went unanswered.

Authorities said self-help expert and author James Arthur Ray rented the facility and was hosting the group inside the dome, a low-lying structure covered with tarps and blankets. In a testimonial on the retreat's Web site, Ray said it "offers an ideal environment for my teachings and our participants."

Ray's company, James Ray International, is based in Carlsbad, Calif.

A spokesman for Ray, Howard Bragman, confirmed that Ray was holding an event at the retreat, as he has done in the past.

"We express our deepest condolences to those who lost friends and family, but we pray for a speedy recovery for those who took ill," said Bagman.



This undated photo provided by the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office shows a 'sweatbox' structure at Angel Valley resort in Sedona, Ariz. Two people died and an estimated 19 others were taken to hospitals Thursday Oct. 8, 2009, after being overcome while sitting in the sauna-like sweat lodge, authorities said.

(AP Photo/Yavapai County Sheriff's Office)

"At this point there are more questions than answers, so it would not be appropriate to comment further."

On Ray's Web site, a guide for participants of the five-day "Spiritual Warrior Event" includes a lengthy release of liability that acknowledges participants may suffer "physical, emotional, financial or other injuries." □

Son: Slain 100-year-old mom, roommate had tension

By DENISE LAVOIE,
AP Legal Affairs Writer
DARTMOUTH, Mass. – The roommate of a 100-year-old woman found strangled in her bed at a nursing home had made "threatening" remarks to the centenarian, her son said Friday, and the slain woman's family had sought to have the women split up.

Elizabeth Barrow was found dead in her bed last month, with a plastic bag tied around her head. This week, authorities ruled the death a homicide. They have not named any suspects.

Scott Barrow said his mother's 97-year-old roommate had complained to nursing home officials about the number of visitors his mother received and had made "threatening" and "harassing" remarks to her.

"She said, 'I'm going to have that bed next to the window,' and my mother said, 'Why do you think that?'" and she said, 'Because I'm going to outlive

you,'" Scott Barrow said. Barrow said he asked officials at the Brandon Woods nursing home to separate the women, but they assured him the two were getting along.

Elizabeth Barrow had lived with the woman for about a year and tried to be "peacemaker," her son said. She told him she did not want to leave her room because that's where she and her husband had lived for several years before he died in 2007.

The home's chief of operations, Scott Picone, said the elderly women were offered room changes twice this summer, and both declined. The two women were friendly toward one another and often told each other "goodnight" and "I love you," he said.

The district attorney has declined to comment on the roommate, and Scott Barrow said investigators haven't told him that she is a suspect. Authorities have said nursing home workers



In this photo provided by Scott Barrow, his mother Elizabeth Barrow celebrates her 100th birthday at his home in Dartmouth, Mass., Aug. 21, 2009. Elizabeth Barrow was found on Sept. 24 strangled in her Dartmouth nursing home bed with a plastic bag over her head.

(AP Photo/Scott Barrow)

and residents are being questioned. Prosecutors on Friday declined to comment, saying they weren't releasing any additional information.

Picone declined to discuss the roommate's current whereabouts, citing privacy issues.

Scott Barrow also said the roommate also would imply that his mother had taken her things. □

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US envoy holds Mideast talks as Obama wins Nobel



A Palestinian man uses a sling-shot to hurl a stone at Israeli border police, during clashes at the Kalandia checkpoint between the West Bank city of Ramallah and Jerusalem, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. In Jerusalem, there were scattered clashes Friday in the city between police and Muslim protesters. Several protesters and policemen were lightly hurt. The friction, in which no one has been seriously injured, appears to have been sparked by rumors among Palestinians about an attempt by Jewish extremists to harm the Islamic holy sites in the compound known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary.

OBAMA PEACE

Continued from Page B2

"In a way, it's an award coming near the beginning of the first term of office of a relatively young president that anticipates an even greater contribution towards making our world a safer place for all," he said. "It is an award that speaks to the promise of President Obama's message of hope."

He described the prize as a "wonderful recognition" of Obama's effort to reach out to the Arab world after years of hostility.

But Former Polish President Lech Walesa, who won the prize in 1983, questioned whether Obama deserved it now.

"So soon? Too early. He has no contribution so far. He is still at an early stage. He is only beginning to act," Walesa said.

Unlike the other Nobel Prizes, which are awarded by Swedish institutions, the peace prize is given out by a five-member committee elected by the Norwegian Parliament. Like the Parliament, the committee has a leftist slant, with three members elected by left-of-center parties. Jagland said the decision to honor Obama was unanimous.

The identity of the person who nominated Obama will not be made public unless that person steps forward. The Nobel committee received a record 205 nominations for this year's prize. The award appeared to be at least partly a slap at Bush from a committee that harshly criticized Obama's predecessor for his largely unilateral military action in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

"Those who were in support of Bush in his belief in war solving problems, on rearmament, and that nuclear weapons play an important role ... probably won't be happy," said Valle, the Nobel Committee member.

Obama is the third sitting U.S. president to win the award: President Theodore Roosevelt won in 1906 and President Woodrow Wilson was awarded the prize in 1919.

Wilson received the prize for his role in founding the League of Nations, the hopeful but ultimately failed precursor to the contemporary United Nations.

The Nobel committee chairman said after awarding the 2002 prize to former Democratic President Jimmy Carter, for his mediation in international conflicts, that it should be seen as a "kick in the leg" to the Bush administration's hard line in the buildup to the Iraq war. □

(AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

By STEVE WEIZMAN,
 Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — When President Barack Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, his Mideast envoy was hard at work in Jerusalem trying to revive a faltering peace process on which Obama has staked his credibility and that of the United States.

Israel's refusal to freeze settlement construction, a Palestinian refusal to resume peacetalks without that freeze and widespread predictions of failure overshadowed George Mitchell's meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders — underscoring the tough road ahead for the Obama administration's Mideast peace ambitions.

Mitchell talked with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for two hours Friday about peace efforts, and the two men agreed to meet again in the next few days, said a statement released by Netanyahu's office after the closed-door meeting.

The statement described the meeting as "effective and constructive" but did not detail its contents.

It said Mitchell and his advisers would meet the next day with senior Netanyahu

aides.

Later Friday Mitchell visited Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank town of Ramallah, where Abbas reiterated his demand for a full Israeli settlement freeze, Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said. Leaving the meeting, Mitchell told reporters that efforts to find a solution would continue, although at a lower level for the time being.

"We invited the two sides to send their representatives to Washington in the very near future to continue our discussions," he said.

Obama began his term in office with a Mideast peace push that included an unequivocal call for Israel to halt settlement activity in the West Bank — a call that was enthusiastically embraced by the Palestinians.

Though Netanyahu agreed in principle to the formation of a Palestinian state and said he would limit settlement construction for a limited time, he refused to agree to a full halt.

At a summit meeting last month in New York, Obama appeared to yield to the Israelis, which — along with Obama's growing domestic woes — made him appear weak to both sides.

Commenting on the president's award Friday, former Israeli U.N. Ambassador Dan Gillerman said he hoped Obama would live up to the expectations the Nobel committee had vested in him.

"I'm a little surprised at the choice, not because I don't appreciate the efforts of the president of the United States for peace, but because in my opinion the test is in the results and not in the attempt," Gillerman told Israel Radio.

"I think that at this time he has done very little, at least from the point of view of results," he said.

"This choice is somewhat premature."

Abbas has been weakened

by public protests against his decision not to pursue war crimes charges against Israel over the Gaza fighting earlier this year.

In Syria Friday, at least 2,000 Palestinians marched in the Yarmouk refugee camp carrying banners calling Abbas a "traitor." There have also been protests in the Gaza Strip.

Under attack from his own people, who accuse him of buckling to Israeli and U.S. pressure, Abbas could find it far more difficult to compromise on his call for a settlement freeze.

In an interview published Friday in the Israeli daily Haaretz, Jordan's king, Abdullah II, warned that the sides were "sliding back into the darkness."

He also expressed alarm at repeated clashes between Israeli police and Palestinian protesters in Jerusalem, describing the city as "a tinderbox."

There were isolated outbreaks of stone-throwing in Arab neighborhoods of the city on Friday after Muslim prayers, but demonstrators were dispersed by police who were deployed in strength, expecting disturbances.

Police said 11 officers were lightly injured by stones and two demonstrators were arrested.

There was no word of any Palestinian casualties.

Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said that on Thursday night police arrested 14 Palestinians suspected of throwing rocks or molotov cocktails over the past few days.

There have been repeated outbursts of unrest since last week, when rumors spread among Palestinians of an attempt by Jewish extremists to harm the Islamic holy sites in the compound known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary.

No such attempt was made and nobody has so far been seriously injured. □

US forces leave isolated Afghan base after attack

By TODD PITMAN,
Associated Press Writer

KABUL — Taliban fighters claimed Friday their flag was flying victoriously over an eastern Afghan village U.S. forces abandoned after suffering casualties in one of the war's deadliest battles for American troops.

The withdrawal this week from mountainous Kamdesh, an isolated hamlet near the Pakistan border, was planned well before the intense Oct. 3 attack left a pair of outposts in ruins and eight American troops dead.

The NATO-led coalition said the move was part of a new strategy outlined months ago by the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, to shut down remote difficult-to-defend outposts and redirect forces toward larger population areas to protect more civilians.

The strategy has an inadvertent consequence, however: Every inch of ground the U.S. cedes, emboldened Taliban militants are likely to take and trumpet as a victory over another superpower.

The Afghan war entered its ninth year this week with President Barack Obama's administration pondering how to counter an insurgency growing more powerful by the day.

Obama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, is considering a request from McChrystal for up to 40,000 more troops to boost the 65,000 who are already in the country. Other NATO countries have a further 40,000 here.

Obama is also debating whether to shift the focus to more missile strikes and special operations raids against al-Qaida in Pakistan, a nuclear-armed country where the terrorist movement's leadership is believed to be hiding.

U.S. Master Sgt. Thomas Clementson said coalition forces destroyed what was left of the two outposts in Kamdesh, at least one of which had suffered severe damage and was largely burned down during last weekend's fighting.

The action was likely taken to

prevent insurgents from using the base.

Speaking by telephone from an undisclosed location, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the U.S. bombarded the outpost with airstrikes after leaving, as well as the local police headquarters.

"This means they are not coming back," Mujahid said. "This is another victory for Taliban. We have control of another district in eastern Afghanistan."

"Right now Kamdesh is under our control, and the white flag of the Taliban is raised above Kamdesh," Mujahid said.

A senior official of the Nuristan provincial government confirmed Taliban forces were in control of the village and Afghan police and soldiers had withdrawn from the district. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Provincial police chief, Gen. Mohammad Qasim Jangulbagh, said the pullout "has had a direct affect on the morale of Afghan forces."

"If Afghan soldiers are losing support, how can they stay there?" he asked. "We need

the coalition to send their forces back. We need more police, more soldiers."

The battle marked the largest loss of U.S. life in a single skirmish in more than a year. Besides the eight Americans slain, three Afghan soldiers and an estimated 100 insurgents died, according to NATO.

Insurgents fought their way into the base during the battle, a rare breach of security that underscored how thinly manned the post was.

Clementson said the attack had nothing to do with the timing of the withdrawal, saying the U.S. was "just days" away from pulling out when it began.

In a statement Friday, the NATO-led force said allied troops and equipment were moved "to other locations in eastern Afghanistan in preparation for future assignment to more populated areas."

Afghanistan is reeling from a wave of rising violence.

On Thursday, a suicide car bomber detonated his vehicle outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul, killing 17 people in the second major attack in the



An Afghan police officer uses his mobile phone to record the scene of a bombing attack near the Indian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. The Taliban have claimed responsibility for Thursday's suicide car bomb in the Afghan capital, saying their target was the embassy.

(AP Photo/Farzana Wahidy)

capital in less than a month. The Afghan Foreign Ministry has hinted at Pakistani involvement — a charge Pakistan denied.

Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao arrived in Kabul on Friday and toured the embassy compound to assess the damage and express solidarity with staff and condolences to the families of two Afghan policemen killed trying to stop the bomber.

She declined to lay blame,

saying only: "This was an act of unmitigated terrorism and we need to investigate it fully."

The Press Trust of India said India will remain committed to development work in Afghanistan. Over the last decade, India has poured nearly \$1.2 billion into the country, helping fund projects such as a new parliament building in Kabul as well as roads and power plants. □

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A Pakistani bystander is seen at the site of the car bomb which has ripped through a packed market in the Pakistani city of Peshawar, killing at least 49 people and injuring over 100 in a region beset by Taliban attacks.

(AFP/A Majeed)

PAKISTAN BOMB

Continued from Page B1

A push into the rugged mountains of South Waziristan could be risky for the army, which was beaten back on three previous offensives into the Taliban heartland there and forced to sign peace deals. But the army may have been emboldened by a reasonably successful military campaign in the Swat Valley and adjoining Buner district and by the killing in a U.S.

missile strike of Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud. The military also appears committed to destroying Mehsud's group, as opposed to its often ambivalent position toward other insurgents in the past. Islamic militants have been carrying out nearly weekly attacks in Pakistan, but the sheerscale of Friday's bombing — which killed nine children — pushed the government to declare it would take the fight

to South Waziristan, part of the lawless tribal belt where al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden may be hiding. Interior Minister Rehman Malik said the militants had left the government "no other option" but to hit back. "We will have to proceed," he told a local television station. "All roads are leading to South Waziristan."

The massive blast tore through a busy road in the heart of Peshawar, a city of more than 3 million people about 150 miles northeast of South Waziristan along the Afghan border. The force of the bomb flipped a bus on its side, ripped apart a motorbike and flung charred debris down the street. Passers-by pulled out the wounded and the dead, covering the bodies of victims whose clothes were burned. One man staggered down the road, his face covered with blood. Another man dashed from the scene carrying an 8-year-old girl dressed in a bright orange outfit in his arms. The child,

Amna Bibi, was heading to a wedding when she was caught by the blast. Her family, sobbing at the main Peshawar hospital in their wedding finery, said later that she had died. Amna's mother, Zareen, kissed her daughter's bandaged face and wept. "I understood for the first time in my life what doomsday would look like," said Noor Alam, who suffered wounds to his legs and face. The hospital was overwhelmed by the wounded, with many forced to share beds. Some of the dead were laid out on nearby gurneys, covered with sheets. "I pray to Allah, please destroy all these people who are killing the innocents," said Sher Akbar from his hospital bed. Zafar Iqbal, a doctor at the hospital, said 49 people were killed and more than 100 were wounded. Peshawar Police Chief Liaquat Ali Khan said the attacker drove a car packed with a massive amount of explosives

and artillery rounds. The blast was heard for miles around. There was no claim of responsibility for the bombing and its target was not immediately apparent. Militants typically attack government, military or Western targets, but previous blasts have hit public places as well. The bombing, along with an attack Monday at a U.N. aid agency in Islamabad that killed five, highlighted the insurgents' ability to hit major cities despite previous army offensives and Mehsud's death in August. In April, the military launched a three-month offensive in the Swat Valley and largely cleared the region of the thousands of Taliban reportedly based there. That operation followed an August 2008 offensive in the semiautonomous Bajur tribal area along the Afghan border that ended six months later with the army declaring success. The militants have fought back with scores of suicide attacks. □



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Honduras police break up protests at site of talks

By BEN FOX,

Associated Press Writer

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Police fired tear gas and a water cannon Friday at protesters outside a hotel where talks on behalf of rival claimants to the Honduran presidency showed little sign of progress.

Six negotiators — three each for ousted President Manuel Zelaya and interim President Roberto Micheletti — met for a second day after a diplomatic mission sponsored by the Organization of American States brought them together. The talks were held in private. Pro-Zelaya protest leader Juan Barahona, one of the six negotiators, told The Associated Press on Friday that no progress had been made on the central issue — the return of Zelaya to office to serve out the remainder of his term, which ends in January.

Zelaya remained holed up with dozens of supporters in the Brazilian Embassy after sneaking back into Honduras. Outside the Clarion Hotel, approximately 200 protesters demanding the Zelaya's reinstatement fled and then regrouped several times as police fired volleys of tear gas canisters from a line of dozens of officers in riot gear blocking the entrance of the hotel. Police finally chased off the demonstrators with a water cannon mounted on an armored vehicle.

There were no arrests and apparently no major injuries, though many people rubbed their eyes or cried from the acrid smoke. "Ow, ow, ow, it's burning my eyes and my skin," 54-year-old protester Rosauo Garcia said, tears streaming down her cheeks from the gas and her shirt soaked with

water from the cannon.

Garcia, a coordinator at a government office that provides assistance to rural communities, joined the protest during her lunch break to show her support for the return of Zelaya, who was forced into exile June 28 after he tried to hold a referendum on changing the constitution in defiance of a Supreme Court order ruling the ballot illegal.

"I came because it's not right what has happened to us," she said. "The president we elected was taken away."

Natalie Roque came equipped with a mask to cover her nose and mouth. "The gases hurt but we've grown used to it after 104 days of violent repression," said the 26-year-old. Roque, a researcher who says she was fired from her job at a government library for criticizing the interim



Riot police shoot tear gas to disperse supporters of ousted Honduras' President Manuel Zelaya during a demonstration outside the hotel where representatives of Zelaya and Honduras' interim government are met in Tegucigalpa, Friday, Oct. 9, 2009. Allies of the rival claimants to the Honduran presidency are continuing face-to-face talks on ending the paralyzing political standoff, after visiting diplomats failed to achieve a breakthrough.

(AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

government, insisted the demonstration was intended to be peaceful and there was no need for police to use force.

Governments throughout the world have called for the restoration of Zelaya in time to prepare for a Nov. 29 presidential election scheduled before he was ousted with the support of much of the ruling elite, including his own

political party.

Honduras has experienced near daily protests since the military-backed coup. The U.S. and other nations have suspended foreign aid and imposed diplomatic isolation on the interim administration. Micheletti has been unwilling to allow Zelaya's return and wants to go ahead with the election without him. □



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Golf, rugby accepted as Olympic sports



COPENHAGEN (AP) — All those beautiful beaches and Tiger Woods, too! After more than a century on the sidelines, golf will return to the Olympics at the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. Rugby, last played in 1924, is coming back as well. Both were reinstated for the 2016 and 2020 games after a vote Friday by the International Olympic Committee. Each sport received majority

support in separate votes after leading athletes and officials from both camps gave presentations, including a taped video message from Woods and other top pros. Woods has indicated he would play in the Olympics if golf were accepted for 2016. “There are millions of young golfers worldwide who would be proud to represent their country,” Woods said from the Presidents Cup in San

Francisco. “It would be an honor for anyone who plays this game to become an Olympian.”

Golf was approved 63-27 with two abstentions. Rugby was voted in 81-8 with one abstention.

Golf will stage a 72-hole stroke-play tournament for men and women, with 60 players in each field. Rugby will organize a four-day seven-a-side tournament — instead of the more traditional 15-a-side game — for 12 men’s and women’s teams.

Padraig Harrington and Michelle Wie addressed the IOC in person before the vote. Wie talked about starting to play golf when she was 4 but never being able to dream of an Olympic medal until now.

“I can dream about doing something that neither Tiger nor Ernie (Els) have ever done, and that is to make the final putt to win an Olympic gold medal,” Wie said. “If this dream comes true, somewhere in the world there will be another 4-year-old who sees me on that podium and perhaps starts her own Olympic dream.”

Rugby officials touted their sport as a modern game that can attract young fans and new sponsors.

“The sevens format is made for

television, made for sponsors, and most importantly loved for fans and players alike,” said bid leader Mike Miller, the secretary-general of the International Rugby Board.

Golf gave a commitment to the IOC that it would not stage any major championships on the Olympic dates. The Rugby Sevens World Cup will be canceled if the sport is added to the Olympics.

They are the first new sports added since triathlon and taekwondo joined the program for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

The vote was a reversal of the IOC’s decision four years ago to reject golf and rugby for the 2012 Olympics, and brings the number of summer Olympic sports back to 28.

There have been two openings on the program since baseball and softball were dropped in 2005 for the 2012 London Games.

Rugby and golf both made their Olympic debuts at the second modern games in Paris in 1900. Golf was played again only at the 1904 St. Louis Games, while 15-a-side rugby featured three more times, making its last appearance in the 1924 Paris Olympics.

Their status for the 2020 Olympics will be reviewed by the IOC in 2017.

Friday’s vote also was a victory for Jacques Rogge, the IOC president who was re-elected to a final four-year term hours earlier. The 67-year-old Belgian, the president since 2001, was the only candidate. “Time will show your decision (on the new sports) was very wise,” Rogge said.

Golf and rugby were put forward by the executive board in August under Rogge’s guidance, at the expense of five other sports that were cut — baseball, softball, squash, karate and roller sports.

The selection process angered some IOC members, who wanted all seven sports put to a vote by the entire assembly. Senior Canadian member Dick Pound complained before the vote that the members were never told why the two sports were selected over the other five.

“It is not fair to the other five sports,” Pound said. “Because you decided the way you did, it is not a transparent process.”

The new selection system was put in place after the IOC failed to agree on which two sports should be added to the 2012 program, leaving the London Games with 26 sports instead of the usual 28. A similar failure this time would have been a blow to Rogge and the executive board. □

Southern Miss walk-on punter killed in gun accident

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP) -- Southern Miss officials say walk-on punter Peter Wilkes has been killed in an accident involving a gun.

A news release from the school says Wilkes was shot Thursday night in his hometown of Union City, Tenn., and died Friday morning.

Wilkes was not a member of the Golden Eagles’ travel party to Louisville for Saturday’s game and was at home during the school’s fall break. He made an early push to win the job at punter during preseason practice, but has not played this season.

Coach Larry Fedora says coaches and players are “shocked and devastated” over Wilkes’ death. □



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Eli Manning practices but no signs of injured heel



EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning (notes) returned to practice Friday and showed no ill effects of the injured right heel that kept him out the previous two days.

Yet the team is still being cautious about his status for Sunday's game against the Oakland Raiders.

Manning is listed as questionable and coach Tom Coughlin said it will more than likely be a game-time decision

whether he will play.

"If the medical people think he can play, then he will play," Coughlin said. "We'll evaluate him every day. I know he wants to play in the worst way, but we're not going to go against the medical people. We're not

going to pencil him in and say he's playing."

Coughlin said that he was "encouraged" by the way Manning looked at practice.

"He did fine," Coughlin said.

"You want someone who can make the exchanges on handoffs and drop back to plant and throw. He did all of that. He'll get some treatment, both here and at home and we'll see how he is (Saturday) when he comes in. If he makes some progress, then I see no reason as to why he won't play."

At the start of Friday's practice, Manning did the regular calisthenics with the team and at one point was leading sprints, causing one coach to yell, "That a way, Eli."

Although Manning seemed to run a little gingerly, he did the regular stretching and squatting with no problem.

When practice began, reserve David Carr (notes) took the first five snaps with the

starting unit, but was quickly replaced by Manning, giving all indications Manning would be ready to start Sunday. Manning has made 82 consecutive starts.

Manning has been diagnosed with plantar fasciitis in his right heel.

He was not available to the media after practice. Team officials said he was receiving medical treatment.

Carr said he watched closely and believes that Manning will be ready Sunday.

"I think he looked fine," Carr said. "He looked good. We'll see how it goes on Sunday. I have to be ready in case he doesn't feel great. It was good to see him out there. He wasn't favoring it and that was a good sign. I watched his dropback to see if he could push off it. I wanted to see if he could do it and he looked fine. I don't want to not be prepared in case I have to go, but I think Eli will go."

Iverson could miss up to 3 weeks with hamstring

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Memphis Grizzlies guard Allen Iverson (notes) could miss three weeks after an MRI revealed a partial tear in his left hamstring.

The Grizzlies made the announcement before Wednesday night's exhibition game against the Oklahoma City Thunder. If the timetable is correct, Iverson would miss all of preseason, and his status for the season opener at home against the Detroit Pistons on Oct. 28 would be in

jeopardy.

"The way I see it, I'm glad it's happening right now rather than in the season," Iverson said in a pregame press conference. "That's the only positive thing I can take out of the whole thing."

Iverson, declaring himself a quick healer, said he expects to be back in time for the opener. He was hurt during the Grizzlies' training camp in Birmingham, Ala. last week and said he was just

starting to get into shape after not playing basketball for five months waiting to see where he was going to land for this season.

"My legs were starting to feel a lot better than they had the first three or four days," Iverson said. "Then, just like that, I hurt the hamstring."

Entering his 14th season, the four-time NBA scoring champ signed with the Grizzlies last month, the biggest name ever to join the franchise. Iverson said



he has never dealt with hamstring problems in his career and wants to make sure he is completely healed before returning to the court.

"My whole thing is to work

as hard as I can to try and get back to 100 percent," Iverson said. "I don't want to try and come back too early and have this thing lingering on throughout the whole season." □



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Justine Henin aims for comeback at Brisbane, Australia



BRISBANE, Australia (AP)—Justine Henin hopes to make her comeback at the Brisbane International, where fellow Belgian star Kim Clijsters will start her 2010 season.

Her coach Carlos Rodriguez told Belgian media on Wednesday that Henin was negotiating with organizers in Brisbane and Auckland to play the tuneup events before the Australian Open on Jan. 18.

Henin would need a wild card to play in Brisbane, and that seemed certain given the tournament's eagerness to have Clijsters and Henin in the same draw.

"It would take it to a new level," tournament director Steve Ayles said. "To have the two comeback queens from Belgium, it would be fantastic."

Brisbane organizers unveiled the draw for the Jan. 3-10 tournament, which includes former No. 1 Ana Ivanovic, Clijsters and Andy Roddick on the men's side.

Clijsters made a stunning comeback from retirement by winning the U.S. Open last month, becoming the first mother since Australia's Evonne Goolagong Cawley at Wimbledon in 1980 to win a Grand Slam singles championship.

The 27-year-old Henin retired last year after winning 41 WTA titles. But shortly after Clijsters' win in New York, Henin announced she was returning to the game.

Henin's goal is to earn a Wimbledon title, the only major she hasn't won. She plans to play at least until the 2012 London Olympics. □

NY federal court says boxing legend Frazier can't sue tribe

NEW YORK (AP) -- A federal appeals court ruled Thursday that former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Frazier cannot sue the Oneida Indian Nation over the use of his picture to promote a fight at a casino because of the tribe's sovereign status.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan said Thursday that Frazier, listed in court records with the alias "Smokin' Joe," will have to take his dispute with the operator of the Turning Stone Casino to the tribe's own court.

The appeals court noted that

the tribe's trial and appellate court system includes two former New York Court of Appeals judges.

Frazier sued the tribe in 2002, saying it used his picture without permission to promote a June 2001 boxing match between his daughter, Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, and the daughter of Muhammad Ali, Laila Ali. Laila Ali won the bout.

Frazier attended the fight, where he saw an allegedly unauthorized picture of himself, his daughter, and Muhammad Ali at a blackjack table in the casino, according to court records.

Frazier's lawsuit had sought \$7 million in compensatory damages and \$9 million in punitive damages, saying he suffered "extreme emotional damage" from the photos. According to the lawsuit, Frazier has never let anyone use his likeness to promote commercial gambling. It said the casino and tribe "knowingly, intentionally, maliciously and unjustly profited from their improper commercial advertising."

A lower court judge had ruled that Frazier could not sue the tribe in federal court because of the tribe's sovereign status.

The appeals court agreed.

Leslie R. Wolff, Frazier's business and personal manager, said he will probably advise his client to drop the case.

"In all reality, he's probably just going to let it die at this stage," Wolff said. "We're all getting older. It was quite a while ago. Joe was not a client of mine at that time."

Mark Emery, a spokesman for the Oneida Indian Nation, said: "When individuals choose to fight rather than negotiate meaningful resolutions, they risk having no resolution at all." □

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US Soccer president says we can win World Cup

LONDON — U.S. Soccer Federation president Sunil Gulati believes the Americans can win next year's World Cup.

The U.S. is ranked 11th but a world title is not so farfetched, Gulati said, if you consider the Americans beat European champion Spain in the Confederations Cup semifinals in June and led Brazil by two goals at halftime in the final before eventually losing.

"It's not an American arrogance that we think we can win it. It's a confidence of: 'Why would we play if we didn't have a shot?'" Gulati told The Associated Press on Friday. "If I had a coach saying we had no chance of winning it, why would you have him as a coach?"

"I'm being deadly serious. Why would be bother going if we didn't think we could win it?"

Not even England coach Fabio Capello, trying to win the country's first title since the 1966 World Cup, is prepared to make such a prediction.

However, the most pressing task for the U.S. team is to secure a place in the tournament in its final two qualifiers.

The United States leads North and Central America and the Caribbean qualifying, followed by Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica. The top three teams qualify, and the fourth-place finisher meets South American's fifth-place team in a two-legged playoff.

Even if the Americans lose or draw in Honduras on Saturday, avoiding defeat against Costa Rica on Wednesday in Washington would send them to South Africa and a sixth straight World Cup.

"I am confident of qualifying, but it's not a foregone conclusion," Gulati said. "Honduras is 8-0 at home in the last year and a half, and we're playing them at home. Mexico has gone there and lost."

"These are tough games, and playing in Honduras would be a tough game for England, France or Germany. This will be a tough game."

It promises to be even tougher at the actual tournament, although the momentum from the Confederations Cup is a source of inspiration.

"Did we have the players to beat Spain? If I'd asked you that question before, you'd have said no -- but we beat Spain," Gulati said. "Would we have the players to be leading Brazil 2-0 at halftime? But we did. We will go there with a group of players that have belief." □

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Diálogo en Honduras en duda, pese a esperanza OEA

TEGUCIGALPA (Reuters) - Las esperanzas de llegar a un acuerdo para superar la crisis de Honduras se diluían el jueves ante la renuencia del Gobierno de facto a restituir al depuesto Manuel Zelaya al finalizar el segundo día de diálogo, lo que profundizó el pesimismo del derrocado líder.

Representantes de Zelaya y del presidente de facto, Roberto Micheletti, se sentaron el miércoles y jueves a una mesa de negociación mediada por una misión de cancilleres de la OEA, que horas antes de partir de Honduras emitió una insípida declaración en la que manifestó su "esperanza" en el diálogo. El depuesto mandatario refrendó su escepticismo en el éxito de la negociación, mientras sus representantes

continuaban tratando de convencer al régimen interino de que la única posibilidad de avance es que se allanen a devolver el poder a Zelaya antes del 15 de octubre.

Los de Micheletti, en tanto, se niegan a profundizar en el punto y sólo admiten la realización de las elecciones convocadas para el 29 de noviembre por el propio Gobierno de facto.

"Todavía el jefe de este golpe de Estado se atreve a decir que de esa silla nadie lo va a mover, que va a ir a elecciones pero reprimiendo a sus opositores", manifestó Zelaya al canal Telesur en la embajada brasileña, donde se encuentra recluido desde hace dos semanas, luego de su ingreso clandestino al país. Un funcionario de alto rango del organismo admitió el desconcierto de



El depuesto presidente de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, saluda al secretario general de la OEA, José Miguel Insulza, antes de una reunión en la embajada de Brasil en Tegucigalpa, 7 oct 2009. REUTERS/Edgard Garrido

los enviados de la OEA que se entrevistaron la noche del miércoles con Micheletti, quien se opuso tajantemente a la vuelta de Zelaya al poder e insistió en las elecciones presidenciales convocadas para el 29 de noviembre como salida. □

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